ON ROWING

BY

STEVE FAIRBAIRN

rowperfect

With a new introduction and notes by
Peter Mallory

VOLUME III

of Four

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A TRUE FRONTIERSMAN FROM THE AUSTRALIAN OUTBACK

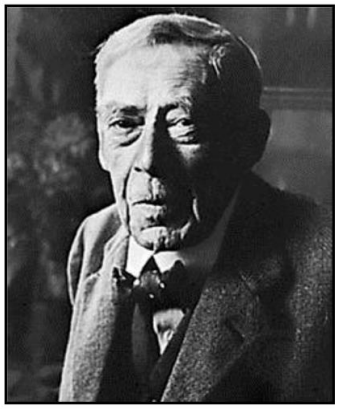
Almost none of Steve's published writings came directly from his hand. They tended to be compilations of talks to crews, evening chats after practise, correspondence he wrote and correspondence he received, heavily revised, edited and organised by others. He was a man of such influence that he was surrounded by people who hung on his every word . . . and then cleaned them up and wrote them down.

But especially his autobiography, "Fairbairn of Jesus", must have needed and received considerable "filtering". His great friend **Freddy Brittain** charitably described Steve as "simple, natural, unpolished, energetic, and strongly individualistic." Even his devoted son, **Ian Fairbairn**, described him as "a colonial in thought and expression." Geelong Grammar's archivist, **Michael D. de B. Collins Persse**, described Steve's "fund of frequently unprintable stories to be told with characteristic gusto to generations of friends."

Göran Buckhorn, in his award-winning rowing blog, ***Hear the Boat Sing***, describes the predicament in which Freddy found himself in 1930 when Steve volunteered to write the introduction to Freddy's seminal rowing bibliography, "Oar, Scull and Rudder", prior to its publication by Oxford.

Buckhorn: "Freddy mentions in his autobiography that he was worried about Steve's offer as 'his style of writing, influenced as it inevitably was by years spent in the backwoods of Australia out of touch with books or educated men, was hardly in keeping with a staid University Press, but I could not refuse his offer.'"

Eventually, they agreed to have a Jesus College don, the King Edward VII Professor of English Literature, **Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch**, "knock it into shape."



According to Buckhorn, "'when the book was published,' Freddy writes in "It's a Don's Life", 'the title-page asserted that it had an Introduction by Steve Fairbairn. It is true that Q had used the same twenty-six letters of the alphabet as Steve, but he had re-arranged them in his own inimitable style.' Steve's opening sentence had been something like 'Me and Freddy have had a lot of talks about rowing,' which in the printed Introduction reads 'In our discussions "frequent and full" on the principles of Rowing it has occurred to my friend Mr. Brittain, as to me, to wonder why a scientific Bibliography of the great Art has never yet been compiled.'"

Freddy's own compilation of Fairbairn aphorisms, one for each day of the year, all in proper English, begins Volume II of this four-volume eBook edition of Steve's complete works. Freddy's obituary of Steve completes Volume IV.

Quiller-Couch developed a genuine affection for Steve. The year following his editing of Steve's introduction, he wrote the Commendatory for "Fairbairn of Jesus", which you will find below. Graciously, he called Steve's autobiography "frank and confident". One can only imagine today how the original manuscript must have read.

Regardless, the end result paints the portrait of a fascinating man and the frontier that spawned him.

As he recounted his life, Steve delighted in describing himself as a ne'er-do-well who was expelled from school on his very first day . . . at the age of four! His gradual transformation into a reasonably serious and well-behaved scholar reads as well today as it did when he wrote it, indeed as well as when he lived it. Remarkably, after such a beginning. he went on to read law at Jesus College, Cambridge, was admitted at the Inner Temple in 1882 and called to the Bar in 1886, though he never practiced.

It is indeed ironic that this wild child eventually found his true calling in rowing, one of the most disciplined of all human endeavors.

Steve's life abounds in such ironies. A man considered a beloved father figure by thousands of rowers worldwide writes an autobiography without so much as a single mention of any domestic intimacy in his own immediate family. While he respected his father and greatly admired his brothers, he describes nothing close to friendship or fellowship with any of them. In one of the very few references to his spouse, he refers to

her as “the wife”. In his other writings, he expressed high regard for his son Ian’s ability in rowing, but not a mention of him in “Fairbairn of Jesus”.

His was a generation of absent fathers, distant parents and boarding schools, so one might surmise that men of that era would naturally seek out and find the sense of comradeship and belonging all people crave outside their immediate families and, in Steve’s case, in boathouses around the British Empire.

Be advised that this autobiography contains references to religious and ethnic minorities that one might consider insensitive today. I get the impression that Steve would have been astonished if anyone had even suggested a century ago that his comments might someday be seen as prejudicial. I have made no attempt to change a word. Consider these writings as a vestige of a less enlightened society in a less enlightened era.

There are a lot of sections of “Fairbairn of Jesus” that have absolutely nothing to do with rowing, but I recommend them to rowers and coaches anyway. First, they are enormously entertaining, sometimes poignant, often fascinating, occasionally hysterical.. Second, I think it is instructive to experience through Steve’s eyes the wild frontier Outback that produced him and where he spent his adult years before his retirement to coaching. It provides yet another measure of this extraordinary man.

Fairbairn played with and against the greatest stars of the first generation of Australia’s international cricketers. Their names are no longer familiar to the general public, so I have provided some background. Be prepared to be *very* impressed.

Steve and his father and brothers were members of a generation of true Australian pioneers. The continental interior was still a vast wilderness when Steve returned home after his studies at Cambridge were completed. He described this time in his life with a long string of anecdotes roughly organised by category, but all feature a man of prodigious physical strength and endurance, an incredibly competitive man, a confident and thoughtful man who put the inevitable ups and downs of life in the wilds into wistful perspective.

To say that Steve’s family were engaged in sheep farming is only one more understated aspect of the life of Steve Fairbairn. Enormous fortunes seemed to be made and lost repeatedly, and there were times when the family controlled more than 500 square miles at once.

With a father and a host of older brothers, Steve was destined always to remain on the fringes, never in charge. Given his ego, it is not surprising to me that at the age of 42

and presumably financially secure for life, he retired and returned to the world of rowing which he was second to none.

Mike Spracklen: “He was an amateur coach, unpaid, who gave freely of his time to help fellow oarsmen. Rowing was his passion, and coaching was his way of putting something back into the sport from which he himself had derived much pleasure as a young man.”

Steve lived another 34 years, the master of his domain with an adoring worldwide following. But the frontiersman in him provides a perspective on his self-assuredness and sense of purpose.

Peter Mallory
Old Oar Cottage
2014

The editor of the 2013-14 eBook presentation of the complete works of Steve Fairbairn is **Peter Mallory**, author of ***The Sport of Rowing***, published in four volumes in 2011 by The River and Rowing Museum in Henley-on-Thames, England. More information on Mr. Mallory may be obtained at www.rowingevolution.com.

THE AUTHOR

standing beside the River Cam
across from Jesus College Boat Club

FAIRBAIRN OF JESUS

BEING THE PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF

STEVE FAIRBAIRN

IN AUSTRALIA, CAMBRIDGE AND ELSEWHERE

WITH A FOREWORD BY

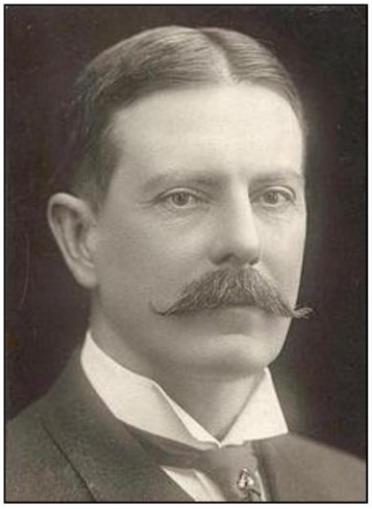
SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH

(1931)

eBook Edition 2014

www.rowperfect.co.uk

DEDICATED
TO
MY "BIG BROTHER"
GEORGE
(SIR GEORGE FAIRBAIRN)



National Library of Australia

[**Sir George Fairbairn**, 1855-1943, Geelong and Jesus College, pastoralist and politician. While at Cambridge he rowed Jesus to Head of the River in 1875 and 1876. In 1890 he took over the family sheep business. He was president of the Employers' Federation of Australia for six years. During his political career, he was a member of the Victorian State Assembly, the Australian House of Representatives and the Australian Senate. Later he was Agent General for the State of Victoria in London. – P.M.]

COMMENDATORY

I enjoyed reading this book because it is written by a real man; an extraordinary book, if you will, written (as clearly he would be among the last to deny) by an extraordinary man; and that is the sort of revealing book which happens to appeal to my humour and sense of fellowship, whether it be written by Montaigne or Bunyan, George Fox or Rousseau, John Stuart Mill or Ernest Renan or "Lord" George Sanger. Without going further into question of literary merit – and here the author will certainly agree that *surtout ne parlons pas littérature* – I affirm that these reminiscences possess the first secret of writing, which is to entertain and amuse. I say this quite seriously, and would add as seriously that to any considering reader the following frank and confident pages will reveal something of the spirit which has made our Colonies; as also – to speak of a smaller thing – of the dominant will, backed by study and a quick eye for every detail of an oarsman's work, which has maintained Jesus College for so many years in its pride of place on the Cam; and this in spite of his "style" being condemned by theorists and discountenanced by the orthodox. *E pur se muove* – and still his crews have "moved" and hold a pretty convincing record for arriving at the given point ahead of their competitors; an achievement which, as an old rowing man, I had supposed to be a racing crew's first and final purpose.

But let that be; and let it pass with no more than a sigh that the author has chosen to entitle this book "Fairbairn of Jesus". There seems, if I may say so, just a little too much of a claim here. Cranmer [Thomas Cranmer, 1489-1556, Archbishop of Canterbury and a leader of the English Reformation. – P.M.] and Laurence Sterne [1713-1768, Anglo-Irish novelist and Anglican clergyman. – P.M.] and Coleridge [Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772-1834, Etonian, English poet, a founder of the Romantic Movement. – P.M.] have, after all, in their turn and in various ways, stood for some other aspirations of this venerable house of learning [Jesus College. – P.M.]. I have already tried to efface myself as a captious Professor of English; but it does seem to me that if this book and Cardinal Newman's [John Henry Newman, 1801-1890, noted literary figure and leader of the Oxford Movement, beatified in 2010. – P.M.] famous "Idea of a University" were published side by side as companion volumes, they would help one another to enlighten us – and foreigners – on the secret of England's success in compromise. Nor am I thinking of her Universities alone. When Mr. Fairbairn enjoys in retrospect the West End of our Metropolis, it is obvious that he has to reserve for his later years all the untasted wealth of that region – the National Gallery, for example, or the wonderful show of marine architecture at South Kensington.

Yes, there are still haunts in London which his ardent spirit has left unexplored, as within the gates of Jesus College there were in his time, and are now to my knowledge, young men following the strict purpose of its Founder. But, meanwhile, here is the tale of a man who, interpreting that purpose in his own large way, and with a single eye for it, is recognised by all as a particular possession, this strong man of his hands. Mr. Fairbairn has not exactly a bedside manner, but nevertheless I commend this book to all healthy men as a good and sound bedside book. It will be a good thing for most of us to

drop off to sleep and dream of what we might have done if our grandfather had weighed twenty-two stone [308lb, 140kg.].

Jesus College, Cambridge,
November 10th, 1930.

ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH.

[**Arthur Quiller-Couch**, "Q", 1863-1944, famous literary critic, the King Edward VII Professor of English Literature at Jesus College, editor of the monumental "Oxford Book of English Verse 1250-1900". The year before he wrote this commendatory, Quiller-Couch edited Fairbairn's introduction to "Oar, Scull and Rudder" by Freddy Brittain. – P.M.]

PART I

FAMILY AND EARLY DAYS

FAIRBAIRN OF JESUS

CHAPTER I

MY FAMILY

My grandfather weighed twenty-two stone in good condition, and at the Scotch Games he did not go in for the wrestling competition but took on the two best together – one in each hand, so to speak.

My mother's brothers were also exceptionally powerful men. They each weighed eighteen stone, and three of them were celebrated in the family for their prodigious feats of strength.

My father went to Edinburgh University when very young, and was educated to manage the family estate, his elder brothers being in other walks of life. But he left England in the year 1848 with two or three companions, with the idea of taking a trip to Australia.

His eldest brother, James, was a captain in the Army. All I know of him is that he bought a shilling razor which lasted him a lifetime, as my aunt frequently told me.

The next brother was Uncle Patrick, a learned divine and a very big man, weighing nearly twenty stone. He was known as Principal Fairbairn, and was vice-chairman of the committee for the revision of the Bible.

After him came my Uncle John. Soon after I came to England he was celebrating his jubilee in the Ministry, having been for fifty years a Presbyterian Minister. The two elder brothers had passed on, so I never saw them. John was a dear, kindly old soul.

I got rather into disfavour with the local people, as I took a sixteen-pound hammer into a quiet spot and practised throwing it on the Sabbath. The whole village saw me and was very shocked.

I was somewhat amused by the way my uncle and his wife referred to each other as Mr. Fairbairn or Mistress Fairbairn. She was not very attractive as a companion to me, but one day when she said she was going for a walk I offered to go with her, but was relieved when she said she would walk too fast for me. I did not contradict her, though I had walked from London to Inverness just before and so I might have been able to keep up. She was one of the hard type of religionists who knew apparently all the contents of the Domesday Book and could tell you exactly where every one would sit in heaven or how they were damned and would go to hell.

Next came my old aunt who brought me up. She used to say she was the same height as Napoleon, 5 feet 2 inches, and had a nose like the Duke of Wellington's. Anyway, she was a general. She began bringing up her brothers' children when she was sixteen years old and was continuously bringing them up until she came to us in Australia at the age of sixty.

My old aunt's description of arriving alone in the country to take charge of us was humorous. She arrived at night, when we were all asleep, and in the morning she made our acquaintance. The living-room was surrounded by bedrooms, and we kept coming out of them in increasing numbers. There were seventeen of us, seven in the family and ten friends, all ages up to fifteen. We had no idea she was coming and she had no notion of what she was coming to. Father was away and we were without anyone in control. The old aunt began by trying, with indifferent success, to get her untamed flock in come to the breakfast table, and things looked serious. Our oldest cousin was the last to appear. My aunt told him to come to table, but he said he wanted his boots first, and refused. There was nothing for it but the primeval way of a fight, so the old lady went for him, and knocked him down. She was thoroughly convinced that this prompt action saved her life. We were dreadfully wild.

Very soon after that episode one of my brothers and I lit a fire outside the house, our ages being then about five and three. The fire got away and burnt the country for some distance. With great trouble the house was saved. We threw stones at the fire to try to put it out.

Just about the same time, my father was swinging the brother next in age to me [Frederick William Fairbairn, 1865-1925, pastoralist, Red Cross director and sportsman. – P.M.]. I was jealous at not being swung, so I got a lump of mud and threw it at him, hitting him in the face and knocking him out of the swing. My father smacked me, and gave my brother half a crown and a piece of raw meat to put over his blackened eye!

Soon afterwards we appeared and asked father to swing my brother again. I had my pockets full of stones. We were after another half-crown.

The old aunt soon got us into some sort of order.

She had the severe old Scottish religion – a God of Wrath, burning Hell-Fire for ever, and the rest of that dreadful equipment. She always flogged me when she saw me. She used to take me out of my hot bath on Saturday night, thrash me while I was naked, and then she would make me pray. I prayed fervently for God to bless my dear aunt. Then my hair was combed for insects and pomaded to be ready for Sunday. On Sunday morning the aunt inspected us, and if one of us appeared to be not well enough to go to church she gave him a dose of Gregory's powder. I managed to get Gregory's powder frequently, as church meant a three-mile walk there and the same back, and a sermon of over an hour.

Sometimes after thrashing me, she would lock me up in the billiard-room. I used to take out the key, so that she could see. Then I would kneel near the keyhole and pray in a loud voice. Then she could hear and see how repentant I was.

My aunt's teaching was calculated to make one a hypocrite and impart a hatred of religion, but it was the old hard Scotch way and made a fine race.

* * * * *

She lived to be eighty-two, and strangely enough she frequently used to say: "If I don't die before I am eighty-two I will get into my long box then." Both my father's family and my mother's family lived to an old age, most of them over eighty, and curiously enough there were no white hairs in their heads on either side, though all the men had grey beards.

Next to my aunt came my father, the youngest. He was one of Australia's finest settlers.

My mother was a Miss Armytage [Amy Elizabeth Armytage, 1858-1939, Australian, famous as a friend to returned soldiers; also worked with the Red Cross and the Boy Scouts. – P.M.], one of a large family of about ten.

Two of the Miss Armytages of a former generation accompanied Napoleon to St. Helena. One afterwards became a nun and one married a Belgian.

After my marriage I once took my wife and young family to Brussels and we met the descendants of that Miss Armytage. Baron General Jolly was the head of the family; he was a friend of the King. His son Hubert was Second-in-Command of the Guides in the war. His daughter was the Countess de something de something, but preferred to be called Betsy. Betsy amused me very much by asking my wife:

"Do you like marriage?" and then: "Have you a flirt?"

They regarded us as wonderful travellers. I used to walk out to the place where the battle of Waterloo was fought. They could not understand why I took such a long walk – I think it was seventeen miles from Brussels – and asked me what there was to interest me there.

On the battle-field we went into a little room in which were souvenirs of the battle. A girl came in and said:

"Mr. Steve Fairbairn, I believe," and I said:

"And so did I, and if it were Geelong I would be sure I was Steve Fairbairn and you were Miss Mackensie."

It did seem weird meeting a Geelong girl on the field of Waterloo – the only other person there – and I'm sure we agreed about the world being small.

My brothers were George (now Sir George), Jim, Charlie, Tom, and Fred.

George, the eldest, was a good all-round athlete; he played cricket for the Geelong town team while still a schoolboy. I remember seeing him bowl for the town against W.G. Grace's team in 1874 or thereabouts. He rowed in the Jesus boat that went Head of the River at Cambridge in 1875, and stroked the October winning four, a very unusual thing for a man with no previous rowing. He won the Ladies' Plate at Henley, and was beaten in the final of the Grand. He stroked the 'Varsity Eight for several weeks in practise, but the old famous stroke Shafto [C.D. Shafto, Jesus College, stroke of the Cambridge Blue Boat that won in 1876 and dead heated in 1877. – P.M.] came back and took his seat. He only stayed two years at Cambridge, as he had not been taught Greek.

Charlie was a great athlete also; he was the most powerful man I ever saw. We were all very powerful, being big and a mass of double joints and so very supple. Charlie captained the school cricket and football teams and played for the town at both games whilst still at school.

George was also a good runner. I remember his winning two races in the town sports while still at school.

Charlie ran second in the 100 yards and 440 yards in the United Public Schools Sports, being beaten by Frank Stephen, an exceptionally good runner, and Charlie had a sprained ankle that gave him a lot of trouble. I saw him play the finest game of football I ever saw, playing for the town team against the factory hands. The captain of the latter team was a huge monster of sixteen stone, and was boasting how he was going to smash up the schoolboys – Charlie and my cousin Norman Armytage. He charged into each of them and found himself flattened out each time. Charlie also was only two years at Cambridge. He rowed Head of the River twice, won the Ladies' [1878] and the Grand [1879] and the 'Varsity Boat-race [1879]. At school he stroked the school four and won the Public Schools' race. He always said the 'Varsity Boat was the worst crew he rowed in. As they gained a couple of lengths at once, Oxford could not have been fliers. George stroked the Victorian Eight in the first Inter-State eight-oared race and won easily. He was a very exceptionally fine stroke.

Tom was a very lazy boy. He came to England for a trip and put in two terms at Jesus. Hockin [T.E. Hockin, Radley and Jesus, Cambridge Blue from 1876 to 1879, rowing directly behind Charlie Fairbairn in 1879. – P.M.] liked his rowing very much and said he was a very fine stroke.

One day he asked me to run a quarter with him. I was in full training for the school sports and he had done no work, and as I eventually won the United Schools' Quarter I was no mean performer. Tom took the outside and ran alongside, and just when I was

getting that feeling well known to quarter runners that my legs were going up and down and not moving towards the winning post, Tom said: “When do we spurt?”

I and two or three of the best boys were running in the School Cup and it was lucky for us Tom was not entered.

Tom walked away with the 100 yards and quarter, and that was his only practise run. With training he would have been phenomenally good. [Tom’s son was George Eric Fairbairn, 1888-1915, winner of the 1908 Boat Race and Silver Medallist in the 1908 Olympic Coxless-Pairs. – P.M.]

Fred was also a good athlete – captain of the school cricket team, winner of the School Athletic Cup, and record high jumper of the school – 5 feet 7 inches. He was also a very fine billiard player, and was the back marker in the Melbourne clubs in competitions.

CHAPTER II

EARLY DAYS IN AUSTRALIA

MY father sailed to Australia in a sailing vessel with an auxiliary screw, but as the journey took six months, the vessel was not often under steam.

On their arrival in Australia, he and his companions decided to give sheep-farming a trial, and they bought a flock of sheep and became squatters.

Jeff Kruger

A view from an Outback sheep station, c. 1882

The original meaning of the term “squatter” – a term which ultimately came to mean a big sheep-farm owner – was applied to the owner of a flock of sheep who squatted down by a good water-hole while the sheep pastured round it. This occupation by squatting was the only right to the land which the original squatters had. Of course, there was plenty land for everybody and so there was really no need for title-deeds.

Land was to be had for the asking, and many amazing instances of fortunes coming from it could be produced. I will give one.

In the very early days a settler loaded his wool on a wagon to carry it to the ship; when a few miles from port, the wheels sank in the mud and the wagon stuck. The owner could not get it out, and was forced to buy a block of land round his wagon to protect it.

He gave £1 for this block. It now adjoins the Melbourne Post Office, and the rent it brings in runs into many thousands of pounds a year.

One of the most remarkable stories of the ups and downs of sheep farming in the early days was as follows: My father wished to buy a property, and he secured particulars of two from the agents. He bought one, after inspection, in Queensland, and advised my uncle to buy the other, which he did.

The property was very far out and droughts and floods had told their tale of ruin on previous owners. My father gave two bills for the property, one falling due in six months and one in eighteen, and he met these bills from the proceeds of the sales of his wool each year.

As time went on, troubles began. The wallaby – a small species of kangaroo – came down in myriads and ate every blade of grass, so that the sheep died of starvation. My father bought another property and moved to it what sheep were left alive.

Then he tackled the question of getting rid of the wallaby. First of all he bought a ton of powder and cartridge cases, shot and wads to correspond, and several guns. These he sent up to the sheep-station – or rather wallaby-station. My eldest brother [George], who was managing, reported that the wallaby were too numerous to be exterminated by shooting. My father thereupon bought two hundred kangaroo dogs and greyhounds and shipped them up to chase the pest off the place. This proved equally inefficacious.

Amongst the two hundred dogs my father bought to exterminate the wallaby, he bought the greyhound that was runner-up for the Waterloo Cup that year. A kangaroo dog was a sort of strong greyhound with a strain of mastiff or some stronger breed.

Once when shooting wallaby, one wallaby received ten barrels from our five guns and went on, when a black threw a nulla-nulla (a short stick) at it and killed it. The howls of delight of the blacks were very audible.

As guns and kangaroo dogs could not destroy the wallaby, my father, who had gone to England for his health, hired a ship, filled it full of wire netting, and wrote out instructions to wire-net the sheep-station in. So he was the first man to put up wire netting. He was also the first man to break away from shepherding his sheep and to fence in his property. The netting had to be put up six feet high, and six inches into the ground. This was a very expensive undertaking.

As I have said, the property had paid handsomely.

According to his custom, my father offered the property for sale, after he had stocked it and improved it, before the wallaby came. He was offered £120,000, but refused it. He asked £125,000. He then bought the freehold of the land round all the best water-holes. In all, he bought 100,000 acres at £1 per acre.

The property was leasehold originally, 300,000 or 400,000 acres in extent. To wire-net this would need very many miles of fencing. For instance, a block of 100 square miles, that is 64,000 acres, if perfectly compact, would be 10 miles by 10 miles, and would need 40 miles of fencing to enclose it, or 80 miles of wire netting, as the fence was 6 feet high and the netting only 3 feet high.

So this property probably took 150 miles of netting.

Goodness knows how many tons that would be, and how much a ton it would cost. In addition to the price of the netting, the hiring of the ship, and the labour of getting the netting up to the sheep-station, there was the enormous expense of carrying by train over 100 miles, and then a similar distance in wagons. Instead of selling the property for £120,000, he bought another for £80,000, lost 60,000 sheep, paid £100,000 for freehold (now very heavily taxed) and the wire fence cost fully another £30,000, with the dogs and gunpowder thrown in.

Here is another instance of the ups and downs of life in Australia.

One of my brother's employees was W.M. Hughes, afterwards Prime Minister of Australia.

When he met my brother in Parliament afterwards he used to tell the following story:

"Mr. Fairbairn, my late employer, sold 180,000 fat wethers [a male sheep. – P.M.] to Cobb & Co. We drove these sheep in mobs of 20,000 to the different points of delivery. We had to go through neighbouring stations along the roads, or stock routes, as they are called. These roads are a mile wide, and the sheep running on the station are apt to get boxed with the travelling sheep, or vice versa, and so the numbers of the travelling sheep increase or diminish accordingly. When we arrived at a boundary fence we counted them and were 1,000 short. At the next boundary, the count showed 2,000 over."

The Prime Minister explained the difference by saying:

"They were very good breeding wethers and had a lot of lambs."

Sheep were not always considered an asset by the bank managers. If a drought was on, experience often showed that the sheep all died, after the owner had spent a lot of money trying to keep them alive, so when pioneers owed their banks money and there was a prolonged drought, they found it hard to borrow more to keep going. One squatter in this position went to his bank manager to try to borrow more money to carry on with.

He began: "I have 20,000 acres freehold, I have 500,000 acres leasehold, I have 30,000 sheep, and 2,000 head of cattle."

"Yes," replied the bank manager, "have you any other liabilities?"

Soon after my father and his pals had settled in Australia, the gold diggings broke out at Ballarat. Every ship was deserted at Adelaide, the crews making a bee-line for the goldfields. It so happened that my father's sheep-run was in a direct line between Adelaide and the goldfields, and the deserters used to pass the house. Members of the crew would each buy a sheep, paying one pound apiece, though, as my father said, they could have easily taken them for nothing.

At last a mob of forty Chinamen came along and bought a sheep each and left behind them one sick Chinaman. He was a great addition to the community, which consisted of my father and a black boy whose life he had saved in a fight with the Blacks, and who became so devoted to my father that he would not leave him. The next morning, when my father came to see how the Chinaman was getting on, he found he had hanged himself. It was too lonely for him. It must have been a lonely life, for the black boy signified his disapproval of the place by drowning himself soon afterwards.

My father had a library consisting of three books – the Bible, Johnson's "Dictionary", and Boswell's "Life of Johnson". He used to read these books through in turn. After the black boy had drowned himself, my father read his library through once more, and then went to the diggings, leaving what few sheep were left, for most had been sold.

He arrived at the diggings soon after the people who had been taking the gold down to Melbourne had been shot by bushrangers. As a consequence no one would tackle this job, and so gold was going very cheap. He bought up all that he could, with the money received for the sheep, tied it on to his horse's saddle and started for Melbourne.

He had a fine horse of which he was very proud. It was a lonely ride through the bush, and the journey took two days. He rode on till after dark, when he came upon a waterhole and camped. Having lit a fire to boil the billy [teapot], he saw by its light the bodies of the two men who had taken the last lot of gold and had been murdered by the bushrangers. At once he withdrew from the circle of light, taking the horse with him.

Then, from his vantage point, he saw two bushrangers creeping towards the fire. He could have shot them both, but fearing there might be others, he stayed where he was and kept still, waiting for daybreak. At the first streak of dawn he rode off. Towards evening, when he was within ten miles of Melbourne, his horse threw him and galloped away with the gold. He cocked his rifle and shot the horse, got the gold, and walked into Melbourne.

I met a lady recently and she told me her uncle had been murdered whilst carrying gold to Melbourne. She was very astonished when I told her my father had seen his dead body.

After this episode, my father went back to his sheep, and took up some country with one of the brothers of his future wife. They went through many vicissitudes of drought, and rising and falling prices of wool, etc. They used to buy and sell on bills (I have given one

example) and he was giving bills on his agents in Melbourne six months after they had gone bankrupt.

These pioneers could not leave their sheep and go to Melbourne, so they had to plod along as best they could. After a time they were nearly ruined by the selectors, or "cockatoos", as the squatters called them.

These people had the right to come and pick the eyes out of the squatters' holdings.

My father imported the first incubator into Australia.

He had trouble with the Customs, who did not know what duty to impose, as they could not decide what category it came in. The incubator lay on the wharf for a month before they decided whether it was machinery or timber. The highest rate of duty was offered, my father being eager to try it. But they would not do anything, and it was a long time before he got it. Eventually he built an incubator house, and, before long, had several incubators going, turning out chickens at a hideous rate.

I remember once being in a tea-shop in Geelong, the nearest town, and being asked to get the people at the chicken farm to send in seventy dozen eggs the next day.

I called at the chicken farm and they said they could do it easily. Father had bought a neighbour's property with quite a good dwelling-house and kitchen on it; the people looking after the fowls lived in the kitchen and the fowls lived in the house. There were incubators all over the house. The idea was to supply Melbourne, Geelong, and Ballarat, the three largest towns in Victoria, with eggs.

My father was great on developing industries. One day he dictated to me his plan for breeding chickens. It was his intention, he said, to have 30,000 hens, put them in fowl houses, join these fowl houses in a line, and move them on every day, just their own length, leaving yesterday's eggs and manure behind; the eggs would thus be collected easily and the land would be improved by the manure. The scheme was a giant one, and had he been younger I have no doubt he would have carried it out.

Among other things, my father started the first meat-freezing works in Australia – they were, I think, the first meat-freezing works in the world – the Melbourne Freezing Works. That would be about the year 1880.

On one occasion he wrote to me, when I was at Cambridge, saying he had just been summoned to the works because something was wrong. The trouble turned out to be very simple; they were pumping the hot air in and the cold air out. All he added was: "This can easily be remedied." He said nothing about 10,000 ruined carcasses.

When he started the Meat Freezing Works he was on the board of the Meat Preserving Company, and he used frequently to find himself in a minority of one on each board, defending the other.

The wonderful thing was that he was nearly seventy years old at the time, and apparently there was no practical engineer on the place. That was why they had to send for my father. All his experience of machinery had consisted in putting up windmills for pumping water.

My father had his hand cut off in one of his windmills when he was over sixty years old. He put a pocket handkerchief over the smash and got my eldest brother [George] to drive ten miles to town with him. On the way he gave instructions how the family was to be looked after if anything happened to him. The doctor arrived, gave him a glass of brandy, and amputated the hand without an anaesthetic.

My father was great on windmills to pump water for sheep. He had been erecting them all his life. He must have had a natural aptitude for machinery. This was inherited, as one of our ancestors, Sir William Fairbairn, was a partner of Stephenson [George Stephenson, 1781-1848, the "Father of Railways". – P.M.], who invented the steam engine. I always had a shrewd suspicion that this ancestor had a good deal to do with that invention, as the thoughts of so many members of our family run unconsciously to inventions.

I remember once going down to the country place where he had the mill that smashed his hand. He had a large dam, and it was a very windy spot, so he called the property Windermere. I asked my brother's wife where he was. She said that he and her husband had gone down the paddock to look for the mill which had been blown away.

My father sometimes put on the table two legs of mutton and asked us boys to take a slice of each and say which we preferred. They were off two of his sheep of the same age.

There was absolutely no difference, we all agreed, but only then did he tell us that one of the sheep had been killed some months before and sent round the world frozen, and the other was freshly killed. He had himself superintended the freezing and the thawing of the sheep. Meat properly frozen and thawed takes no harm. But it requires a slow process and should take six days to freeze and six days to thaw, because as it gets near freezing point expansion similar to that of water takes place, and if it is not done very slowly the corpuscles burst and the juice of the meat escapes.

My father also started the Apollo Candle Company; he and four others combined and they started on a capital of £50,000. Though an old man, my father worked very hard at this company to make it a success.

We heard a great deal about the Candle Company and we saw a lot of candles. He used to give dinners, and would light candles all over the house. As you entered the hall two huge candles, very like barbers' poles in size and colouring, met the eye, and candles flared everywhere.

Not only did we hear of candles and see candles, but we smelt candles. This was on the bridge where the train crossed the Yarra, near to which the candle works were situated. The smell was very strong. People in the train used to object audibly, and one felt somewhat disgraced.

My youngest brother [Fred] was asked at this time, at school, who was Apollo, and he replied, “The God of Candles”. He was very surprised when he was thrashed.

My father sold out, and took up property in Queensland. About the same time he bought for £11,000 a property called Till-Till. This property he developed and sold for £111,000 a few years afterwards.

He bought several other Queensland properties, one of which, called Lansdowne, he developed and sold for £250,000 cash. This left him in a very good position, with several properties, about a million sheep, and £100,000 lying idle in the bank. He was a director of the bank, and one day he told my eldest brother [George] that he had borrowed £60,000 from it. My brother was startled, as there was £100,000 in the bank earning no interest, but it was no use arguing. My father said it was very cheap money. He had so got into the habit of borrowing money, buying properties, improving them, and selling them that he could not resist the cheap money, though he had £100,000 in the bank lying idle. He finally clinched the argument by saying:

“Well, George, we have a good season, a good price for wool; things are devilish slow – one must do something.”

Captains of industry and pioneers like my father are the bone and sinew of the Empire. He paid over £3,000,000 in wages to his working hands and in working expenses.

He told me that once he wanted a working man for an essential job immediately, so he rode over to the public-house and asked the publican if he could have a man by Thursday. The publican looked at the men’s cheques and said he could not, as they would not have “drunk their money” by then. On my father saying he must have one, the publican went over and looked at the “drunks”, who were all lying asleep in a row on the floor of the bar room. After surveying them, he pointed in one and said, “You can have that one by Thursday. I’ll put him on Burgundy.”

Father told me that the best worker he ever had had a fear he would die with some money unspent.

Bushrangers were still going when I was young, and the Kelly gang became very famous. The Kellys’ sister had been interfered with by the police, and the Kellys were vindictive against them. They used to cut their ears off when they caught them.

We had a very cool, athletic footballer in our local team; he was also stroke of the Inter-State Eight. He was a bank clerk at Euroa, a small town a little way from Melbourne. He used to come to play with us on Saturdays. One day we read that the Kellys had “stuck

up” Euroa and robbed the bank. When later our hero turned up, we crowded round him to hear his story of the Kellys’ raid. He said quietly:

“I looked up, and saw a man standing across the counter pointing a revolver at me. He said, ‘I am Ned Kelly. Open the safe, I want the money.’”

Here was a situation for our hero.

“What did you do?” we asked.

“I hopped over the counter pretty quick and opened the safe,” he replied. “Then Kelly told me to harness the horses into the buggy and bring it round, which I did. He made the manager and his family get in and tied them up, but I persuaded him to let me drive. We were taken to a farm some miles away, and here the other raiders – a gang of four – had brought the rest of the town. We were seated in a big room and told that if we went out before midnight we would be shot. Nobody dared to move till two in the morning, and then no one seemed eager to be the first to move.”

The Kellys were reported to be wonderful shots. It was said they could all hit the china tops of the telegraph poles with a revolver while riding at full gallop. They had all the police after them, and cost Victoria over £25,000 before they were captured.

These notorious bushrangers were caught at last in a bush “pub”. A special train-load of police, together with a small piece of artillery, were brought up. They laid siege to the house in which the Kellys had established themselves. After a time Ned Kelly came out and walked towards the police, who fired at him continuously; ultimately they wounded him in the Achilles tendon in the heel. When captured he was found to be wearing armour, made out of ploughshares and weighing over ninety pounds. The doctor who attended him in gaol and saw him hanged, told me that as Ned Kelly walked to the scaffold his only words were, “Such is life!”

"Thunderbolt” was another famous bushranger. His favourite amusement was shooting Chinamen in the back, to see how high they would jump. Two boys were at school with me who once had a tutor who became the famous “Moonlight”, called "Starlight” in “Robbery under Arms”, Rolf Bolderwood’s famous novel [a classic Australian novel, first serialised in *The Sydney Mail* beginning in 1882. It is still in print and even available as an eBook. – P.M.]. “Moonlight” used to preach in church with revolvers in his belt, they told me.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATION

My first day's schooling was at the age of four, but did not last the day out, as I was expelled early in the afternoon. I waited until school came out and carried one of the girls home. Her name was Bella, and she was only three.

On one occasion, many years later, my father told his factotum, David, he was sorry, but the job necessitated a married couple, so David would have to go. David replied:

"Very well, Mr. Fairbairn, I'll get married." – and he married Bella.

My next school broke up when I was six years old, the two old ladies who kept it relinquishing their duties. On the last day every one else got prizes, but I got a whipping. I had been caught down a well with a girl.

I left my next school because I stole turnips. Then, at eight, I went to the Wesley College, one of the public schools of Victoria, where I survived for two years. But I undid a new door from one of the outhouses, and hid it, and again I went home with a letter requesting my father to remove me.

Victorian State Library

Geelong Grammar School

I then went to the Geelong Grammar School. There, on one occasion, I complained to the Headmaster that I had a bad headache, and as scarlet fever was prevalent, I was put into the sanatorium. In the morning there was a paper-chase [also known as "hounds and hares". – P.M.], and I slipped out of the window, got one of the sacks of paper, went off with the other hare, and had a good 6 miles' run before we were caught. In the afternoon our school and the other big school in the town played the town football team. This team was Victoria's crack side, and a really good side it was; good judges have since told me it was a better side than the great New Zealand "All Blacks" side. The schools won, and were very proud of the victory. A six-mile paper-chase and a hard football match was not a bad day's work for a boy sickening for scarlet fever.

In the evening I had a long chat with the Head, who had been away for the day and came into the prefects' room to hear the news about the day's games, and he was very pleased with the schools' victory.

Suddenly he said:

"By the way, weren't you isolated in the sanatorium?"

I had forgotten all about it, and this was a shock.

Luckily he was in a very good temper, and so he added:

"Oh, well, you seem all right, so we'll say no more about it."

Bolting from the sanatorium when suspected of developing scarlet fever, was a very serious offence. However, he knew I was hopeless as a law-abider, as he was aware of my history before coming to that school. On one occasion he said to my elder brother Tom and myself:

"Tom, if all boys were like you no discipline would be necessary, and, Steve, if all boys were like you, no discipline would be any use."

My school career with him had been one long series of troubles, until one day he called me into his study and had a long, serious talk with me.

He began: "Stevie, I don't know what to do with you. I love you as a son, but I can't keep you. You are destroying the discipline of the school. We are just going to bed at night, tired and worn out after a long, wearying day, when – Bang! Crash! Pandemonium is let loose. Up get the masters, and we say: 'There's Stevie again!' What am I to do?"

You could have knocked me down with a feather. "I love you as a son. . . . What am I to do?" These words opened a new idea of life to me. Grown-ups and schoolmasters seemed to me to be born merely to get in the way of all amusement and fun. I was brought up by an old Scotch aunt who used to thrash me whenever she saw me for past misdeeds, and I, knowing I should be punished anyhow, used to get into all the mischief I could. The Head was sitting on the desk, and I sat down beside him and said: "Suppose, sir, you try kindness – no one ever has. I just look on these things as having a lark and, if caught, I get punished. I have been thrashed all my life, and I feel I must do something to deserve it."

"Very well, Stevie. You can go."

No sob stuff, but I never forgot that day. The Head loved me; the Head was at his wits' end what to do with me. If every one in authority would, and did, strike the same note, what a happy world it would be!

We had no more trouble, and no more loyal boy ever lived from that day.

We always considered the Geelong school the Eton of the South, and now the school has adopted the English system of dividing into houses. Our Headmaster, J.B. Wilson, had that greatest asset, the milk of human kindness, and was beloved by the boys. He had one peculiarity: if the boy didn't answer a question quickly he got very angry.

On one occasion he asked a boy:

"Are you living with your mother or your grandmother now?" and back came the answer:

"Yes, sir."

Explosion from the Head.

Another little kid, the smallest boy in the school, was "sent up", and appeared after school with several others. He was told he was in for it, and on his name being called he did not answer, but walked straight up to the Head holding out both hands to be thrashed, poor little kid. He puts one in mind of the little boy who gave his mother a transfusion of his blood, and who was sitting alone, very down, when the doctor appeared. He asked the doctor:

"How long before I croak?"

One other master I must mention, J.L. Cuthbertson, who taught us *esprit de corps*, to play for side not self, and who infused a spirit into the school that will, I hope, live for ever. He wrote many verses in the school magazine, of which, by the way, I was co-editor with him during my last two years. One lot of verses I liked perhaps more than all the rest:

In the cool deep shade of a forest glade
I lay by the camp-fire dreaming,
And my heart went back o'er the vanished track
Of the days there is no redeeming.

For I seemed to stand in a Northern land
With the friend of my boyhood by me,
'Neath the dark green lines of the giant pines,
And the river rushing nigh me.

We may meet no more as in days of yore
From the place where of old we parted,
For the fir trees wave o'er the lonely grave
Of the true and the tender-hearted.

But the vision passed in the forest vast.
And I heard but the mournful sighing
Of the wind that pressed from the distant West,

From the land where my comrade's lying.

That was our Senior Classical Master.

I once helped our Senior Mathematical Master to edit a little book of mathematical formulae. He was another fine character. All the boys agreed that he was a miracle at managing boys. He was one of a family of nineteen, and it just dawns on me as I write that that was probably the reason why he understood boys.

We used to have evening study, all the school in one huge room. The first time this master was in charge of evening study after I had become a pupil, it behooved me to show the boys that I could get the better of him, as I was a notorious character. I took in a Red Indian story, "Tommyhawk, Rifle, and Revolver" to read surreptitiously, to show the boys how I could beat the master.

He got up and stood staring out of the window into a black night, so I read the novel openly. But I whipped it into my pocket at the first move of the master, and was diligently pursuing my studies when he walked up to me, a proud, happy boy who had scored first trick.

Imagine my horror when he said:

"Give me the book you were reading and which you put in your pocket as I was turning round."

I gave it to him and he held it up and said:

"The boys in Fairbairn's class need not order any more of these books as they won't be used any more." – and he threw it into the fire.

It puzzled me for a long time how he knew I was reading this book, as his back was turned to me. At last it dawned on me that it was a very black night and that the room was reflected outside by the window.

Once at evening study, at a later period, he said: "I am going out, and will leave Fairbairn in charge to keep silence."

This was setting a thief to catch a thief.

The effect was electrical. The room was silent before, but it became deadly still, and every one knew they dared not make the least sound or I would report them, and I felt they were all working harder.

On one occasion some of the prefects were eating the master's supper, which they frequently did, as they could hear the master walking along the passage to the supper-room, and this gave them plenty of notice of his approach. This time the master's footsteps were too near for escape, and they dived under the table.

This master, with reason, was known as “The Terror”. He sat down and ate his supper slowly, and then said:

“Now then, you boys, come out,” which they did, and they never tried to steal supper again.

I came into his class in an interesting and unusual way. I had been in a very elementary class for two years because the first day I came into the class I was making a noise and the master kicked me out for the hour’s lesson. The next day the same thing happened, and every day afterwards I made a noise and got kicked out during this hour. During this enforced leisure I practised marbles, tops, or kicking the football, and became very proficient at them all.

This went on regularly for two years, and then there was a change in the system of classes and each boy was put in the same class for all lessons, so I had to move up three classes in mathematics.

Strangely enough, I found I liked mathematics very much, and since I have often wondered if it was natural ability or if my brain was clearer owing to not having been dulled by teaching for two years. I am sure so-called teaching frequently sets up a dullness and hatred of a subject.

Be that as it may, at the end of each month we had mathematical papers for the whole school, and my first month’s papers produced 100 per cent. The maths master was so pleased with my papers that he got the school a half-holiday to celebrate the 100 per cent. – the first time it had ever happened.

Some of our junior masters were very different from the seniors. I remember when my brother Charlie was football captain, I asked him why he refused to let a junior master join in a practise game. The answer was an illuminating side-light on the material for junior masters in those days. Charlie said:

“He stinks too much.”

By the way, Charlie was a great character. The last two years he was at school he kept the boys in order, and for some time afterwards, if there was anything serious going on amongst the boys and the masters were upset, they would say:

“If only Charlie Fairbairn were here!”

On one occasion when the masters said this, the Head said:

“Damn Charlie Fairbairn!”

Not that Charlie was a prig; he was simply a very strong and isolated character.

The police and the soldiers gave him the same character in the big Queensland shearing strike of 1891, and said that his coolness and judgment saved many lives.

During my last year at school I missed the July examinations. On these, and the exams at Christmas, our class was marked for prizes. I had won the mathematical Dux of the school prize the year before. A very handsome prize was always given for this, and, of course, I wanted to win it again. I was disappointed when I was told that I was to receive nil for my July exams.

To win the prize, I had to beat the other boys' two exams in one. I shall never forget watching the examiner mark the last set of papers. He was sitting beside me, and I watched him. I knew exactly the total marks, and I was leading when he came to the last boy's papers. As he marked them, question by question, this boy ran me very close. It came to the last question and I was leading by one mark, and I was hugely delighted to see a round 0 go down. I, in one exam, had beaten the others' two exams, and there was some good talent in the class. The boy who was second to me had a twin brother in the class. They became mathematical masters, and I was told that one was eventually appointed Mathematical Professor at Melbourne University and the other at the Sydney University, Australia's two highest mathematical posts. To beat them in one exam against their two was an argument in favour of games.

I came to Jesus College in 1881, and soon made the acquaintance of that grand old English gentleman, H.A. Morgan [Henry Arthur Morgan, 1830-1912, considered instrumental in the transformation of Jesus from a seminary for Church of England clergy into an institution of broad-based learning. – P.M.], who was tutor then [1863-1885], and afterwards master [1885-1912].

H.A. Morgan once asked me why I came to Jesus College, and I said because I did not know there was any other college in Cambridge, and, I added, "I have not found out that there are any others yet."

"No more have I, Fairbairn," he replied.

He had a peculiar voice when talking, owing to deafness; he would shout half a sentence very loudly and almost whisper the other half.

He used to tell very amusing stories, and possibly his way of delivering them was responsible for the way they were repeated. He was very keen on mountaineering and the report of one story went:

"I fell over a precipice . . . three hundred feet . . . and landed on . . . a bed of nettles . . . and saved my life."

I have put in the dots to illustrate the way he spoke, and to show how some words may be left out, but the story ran without any dots. Again, he described how, when rowing in an eight, it sank at the railway bridge and he went under and never came up till he

arrived at Ditton, four hundred yards or more away. That would take a couple of days, so he must have been under a long time.

A law was passed allowing Dons to marry, and there was a great matrimonial rush amongst the Dons. Of course, the undergrads got a lot of fun out of it and made many jokes. The most humorous was when the wife of one of the Dons of another college was expecting a baby, and the undergrads got up a sweepstake, and drew the different possibilities.

Red Morgan, the Dean, was a huge man, 6 feet 4 inches in height. He seemed to tower over one and walked at a tremendous pace. He had huge feet. He rowed, and he used to say he would have got into the 'Varsity Eight if he could have cleared his feet.

Not very long ago an old Jesus man told me that one day the tutor, H.A. Morgan, had told him when at College that he, the Tutor, had been given carte blanche to buy a Senior Wrangler [the top mathematics undergraduate at Cambridge University. P.M.], and he secured Billy Welsh, who became Senior Wrangler.

Welsh was reputed to have called up the Examiner during one paper and told him he had set two questions wrong, and the Examiner agreed and altered them.

One must not forget Tommy Watt, who knows every athletic performance of every Jesus man for the last fifty years. He was very proud of travelling in America, because they called him Professor Watt there.

One can't go through all the Dons, much as I would like to. The old College has a spirit of proud isolation which is being capitally maintained by the present Dons, and I can honestly say Jesus College is lucky to have such Dons, and they are lucky to be Jesus Dons.

In the 'eighties there was a difference from the present days. Many men came up merely to pass a few years, and degrees were not taken so freely. Now they work more and not too much. I stayed up six years and attended one lecture. It didn't interest me.

I took my degree of B.A. and also qualified as a barrister at the Inner Temple. I was told recently that the Oxford Dictionary had introduced the verb "to Fairbairnise". Surely, if that is so, they ought to give me an Oxford LL.D. Why do Oxford men have a dictionary? They can't spell any better than Cambridge men.

Jesus College had ivy on all its walls till recently, but the ivy has gone. Still the isolated proud spirit remains.

I had almost forgotten two of my best friends, Canon the Rev. Dr. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Charles Whibley [1859-1930, author of literary commentary and criticism. – P.M.]. Foakey had nothing to do with billiards. He was the Dean of Jesus College and a good sportsman. I was once asked what he was. This rather nonplussed me, so I said:

“He is the leading European authority on the Hebrew language.”

Charles Whibley came to call on us, and the wife asked me who he was. I knew he had been senior scholar when I was up, but I didn’t know any more. He had long hair and a flowing tie, so I said he was a great poet.

Soon after Foakey came to stay with us, and I asked what Charles was.

“Whibley writes the finest English of anyone, and his ‘Musings without Method’ in ‘Blackwood’ are famous,” he replied.

I repeated this to the wife and she said:

“Yes, I thought he was something funny.”

By the way, Charles is a Fellow and the others are Dons. I wonder if anyone knows the difference.

I think Charles would have made a greater criminal than any of the Dons. I told him, when he had not joined the criminal classes he had missed his vocation. He was flattered. But just read his “Musings” and you’ll see.

During my undergraduate days I remember a lively episode occurred after a Cambridge dinner given by a young Australian who invited Jack (another Australian) and myself, to meet some young sprigs of the English nobility. He did not ask a third Australian whom we thought he should have asked. Consequently Jack and I made up our minds to wreck the dinner, which we did.

Jack had no sooner eaten his oysters than he pocketed the shells, stepped on the table, and gave the company a song and dance. We continued in the same vein. The young bloods enjoyed the show and we had a wet and merry meal. On departing, I was extracting the doorbell as a souvenir, and of course it rang. The landlord was sleeping right beside the door, and he put his head out of the window and called, “Police!”

I said, “Come on, Muttle [Stanley Duff Muttlebury, 1866-1933, Steve’s winning Boat Race teammate in 1886 and 1887, arguably the strongest rower of his era. – P.M.], he wants the police,” and Muttle and I picked him up in his nightgown and nightcap and ran down the street calling “Police!”

When we saw a policeman, we said to our victim, “There’s a policeman,” and dropping him we went away rapidly.

We then went to Parker’s Piece [a 25-acre common near the centre of Cambridge, historically used by the Cambridge University Football Club and regarded as the birthplace of the rules of Association Football. – P.M.] and began taking the tops off the lamp posts. I was taking one off when Muttle called, “Proctor!”

I looked down, and there were two bull-dogs (the top-hatted attendants of the Proctor) running to catch us. I leapt down and started running before I got to the ground, so went down flat. The bull-dogs ran over me and chased Muttle, whom they did not catch.

PART II

ATHLETICS

CHAPTER IV

ROWING

I began athletics very early. My first performance was at the age of nine when I represented my school in the under-twelve-years-of-age race in the United Public Schools of Victoria Sports, at which there were more than 10,000 spectators, and from that time I have engaged in every form of sport with much more than average success.

In my last year at school I gained more points in those same sports towards the Challenge Cup for the best school than any other school got with all its boys – a performance I doubt if ever equalled. I also played cricket and football for the Geelong first team during my last three years at school, being put down by the papers as the best footballer in Victoria. I won the School Athletic Cup twice.

Though still a schoolboy, I was chosen for my bowling in a match in preference to George Palmer [George Eugene "Joey" Palmer, 1859-1910, played in 17 test matches between 1880 and 1886. – P.M.], who bowled for Australia the next year in the team that visited England, and I was asked to row in the Inter-State Boat-race for Victoria when just leaving school. My swimming performance was on the same lines; and I have been studying the theory of athletics ever since. In consequence I hope it is not out of place that I am devoting a good deal of space to the athletic side of my reminiscences, hoping that it will interest athletes of all branches of sport, and between the lines especially it may be instructive. All athletics have a common basis, and I find directly I get into conversation with a first-class athlete, of any branch, our ideas are identical. But these ideas are not so easily gained by the average man, and it is between the lines that possibly he will find, in these memoirs, ideas of use to him.

That football team was only beaten in one match in those three years, and was champion for the three years I played.

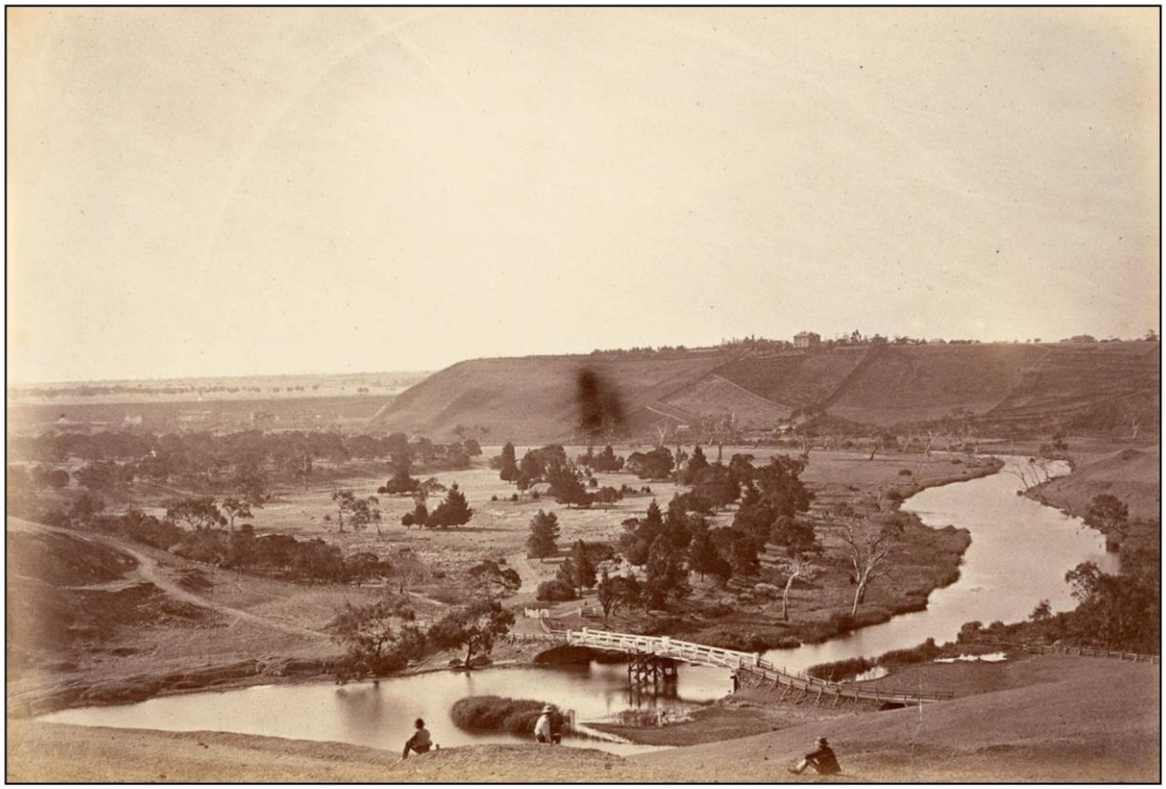
We always had special trains running from Ballarat and Melbourne, each forty miles away, to see our matches.

I was away for the match in which they were beaten, and when I returned the Captain and Vice-Captain came to me and said:

"Make the forwards play together, they have been getting selfish while you have been away" – a high compliment from two of the most famous footballers to a schoolboy. Add to this the fact that *The Times* said recently that I had done more for English rowing than any one, and I think there is some justification for being lengthy on the athletic part.

I was thirteen years old at the time when I first got into a boat. At once I felt it was the best of all forms of sport, and I soon appreciated the joys of racing against other boats.

We had just started a boathouse and boats at Geelong school.



Jeff Kruger

Barwon River, Geelong, c. 1880

Another boy was as keen as I was, and we began rowing together and chatting about how we loved it. Soon we took our Saturday expeditions in boats. We had a whole holiday on Saturday and could leave the school as early as we liked, and go where we liked, so long as we were back in school by eight o'clock at night.

Before the school possessed a boathouse we used in make our Saturday excursions on foot, starting early in the morning and returning late at night. I went by myself the first time and bought two large tins of sardines to eat. I never ate a sardine again for the next twenty years.

The next trip I remember was with four or five others. Towards evening we came to a creek which necessitated a swim of about five yards to cross. I could not swim, but I struggled across and so learnt to swim.

When we got a boathouse we would leave the school at 4 a.m. and start off in our four-oared, in-rigged boat, with a cox, and two of the crew would probably be in a boat for the first time. We would paddle away for an hour and then disembark, light a fire, and put the billy on to boil. While the billy was boiling and the chops frying, we enjoyed a swim, then breakfast. We took plenty of chops, bread, butter, tea, and sugar with us; a billy and a couple of pannikins [small metal cups], and a frying-pan made up our luggage.

After breakfast we would row on, the first cox rowing and one of the others steering, and so we would change all day, every one steering in turn and rowing on each side of the boat. We never heard of a boy who could row on only one side of the boat.

We would row on to a vineyard where there was about an acre of grape vines, and we would pay the owner sixpence apiece and eat all the grapes we could, and we could eat a lot!

Then we would go on rowing for a couple of hours; then into camp, light the fire, and put the billy on and boil the water for tea – and another bathe. When the chops were ready, we would get into trousers and sweater and feed. Originally we fed naked and kept on bathing, but we got blistered badly in the sun, and sunburnt, and the skin was painful for some days, so we partially dressed.

After this, we rowed on to a strawberry place and paid one shilling apiece and ate huge quantities of strawberries. More swimming, and then we turned for home. Half-way we had an evening meal – chops for a change – and then we rowed home in the twilight. The last four miles or so the boat used to swing along beautifully in the fast fading twilight.

I had only been a few weeks in England when I canoed from Putney to Henley, fifty-six miles, and I went up the river Wey by mistake, about three miles, making sixty-two miles in all. There was a strong wind against me all day, so it was a hard day's work. I did it for a bet of £1 which I never got. I had no idea of the distance or of the number of locks, or I doubt if I would have attempted it. The bet was "in a day", so I started at midnight in a Rob Roy canoe from Putney.

I sent my luggage by train and took a few apples in the canoe. I shall never forget the scenery when day broke. I felt I was in Fairyland, with the birds singing, and the beautiful lawns and boathouses and houses along the banks. I kept plugging on, always hoping to see a hotel on the bank. I saw one at 8 a.m. just against a bridge and had breakfast at it. Again I plugged on, always expecting to see more hotels for meals, but it was not till 4 o'clock in the afternoon that I saw anything of the sort, and then it was only a small pub. I got a brandy and soda and some biscuits and went on.

Night came on and I experienced a new sensation. At the sound of the water running over the weirs I took fright, and about 10 o'clock when I met some boats I asked one whether they were going to Henley, and on being told they were, I asked whether I could keep near them as my nerves had broken down. So we proceeded, and I arrived at the landing-stage above Henley Bridge at 11 p.m. and won my bet. I think this trip was a feat few could do without any previous practise. Anyway, I am willing to bet as many as like a pound apiece they can't do it.

When I got out of the canoe, to my surprise I found it was more than half full of water, and more to my surprise, I took a couple of staggering steps and fell flat. My legs were numbed. Of course, the boatman thought I was drunk.
The wind had risen and the waves had been coming in during the latter part of the journey; there had been no water in the canoe when night came on.

Next morning I got my luggage and came down beautifully dressed to the place where the canoe was, to make arrangements about getting it back to Putney. My costume was the only one ever worn in the British Isles, I was given to understand: a top hat and a frock coat. So I have no hesitation in saying I was the best-dressed man ever seen at Henley.

I arrived on the landing-stage just as my canoe was being let out, and on remonstrating with the boatman, he said I wasn't the man who was in the canoe the previous night. I suppose he thought I was Gladstone in those clothes. However, I told him he could let it out and get it back to Putney for nothing, and that was the last I saw of the canoe.

A Jesus College man saw me, and was horrified at my clothes and lent me flannels.

Immediately after Henley Regatta I started to walk from London to Inverness with a cousin.

We walked down Regent Street and Oxford Street and away out by Edgware Road in knickerbockers and slouch hats, a much more heinous offence than wearing a frock coat and top hat at Henley.

We had done many forty-mile walks together at school in a day. So we agreed we would not walk more than twenty miles per day. On the first day we did twelve miles and arrived at Edgware. It was a fearfully close afternoon. There were two public houses here, but though one could give us beds, neither could give us dinner. Eventually we put some bacon and eggs, and went to bed to get rid of our clothes, which we had sweated through, owing to the extraordinarily close weather.

The following days we walked twenty-two, thirty-two, forty-two, and fifty-two miles respectively.

On the evening of the forty-two miles, I found the soles of my boots were worn through, and the socks also, so I stuck pads of blotting paper under my feet and did the fifty-two miles. We were properly "done in" as we arrived in the town. I remember the last mile or two was on cobble stones and my blotting paper wore out.

A crowd of urchins had gathered round us, walking in clogs, and the rattle of the clogs on the cobble stones was hideous, worse even than their shouts to others to come and look at the "Velocopedists". That is what they thought we were. We did not try for a sixty-two mile next day; possibly we had settled that we could not beat each other.

The evening before we arrived in Edinburgh the Achilles tendon of my left foot went wrong and the joint became stiff. My cousin kindly offered to stay a day if my foot was not well enough to go on – that was too much! My foot was all right, but if he were tired, I would stop with him. So we went on. I walked the twenty-seven miles on my toe, as my heel would not go on the ground, and we arrived in Edinburgh in time for lunch. Next day we left Edinburgh by the 12-o'clock ferry and walked to Perth, arriving at 9 o'clock in the evening – thirty-six miles in nine hours. We averaged thirty-five miles a day right through, as it took us two and a half weeks to walk the six hundred miles to Inverness. Charlie Rowell [a.k.a. Cark von Ledebur, 1862-1948, a Swiss native living in Australia, athletic trainer, famous champion long-distance walker and career criminal. – P.M.] had just done his six hundred miles in six days, so he could have given us nearly two weeks' start.

On one occasion my elder brother [Tom], a cousin, and I walked across Tasmania when they were sixteen and I was fourteen years old.

We started at 11 o'clock the first day and walked on and camped out, walking on till dark. We slept badly and started away at 5 a.m., and finished our walk by midday, lunched, felt lonely, and decided to go on, as we were told there was a hotel six miles on. When we got there it had been turned into a private house and the next hotel was nineteen miles on. We walked on; my brother knocked up. I took all our swags and coats and my cousin supported my brother. We got to an hotel at midnight, thirty-three miles from Hobart (or Hobart Town, as it was then called). That made a ninety-mile walk in thirty-six hours – not bad work. We walked into Hobart, covered with dust from head to foot and with swags on us, and asked for rooms at the best hotel, but we were turned away. As we were leaving we were recognised and the best rooms were put at our disposal.

On the following day we walked up the mountain. We ran a good way up, going for a record, and took from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. to do the trip, and the usual thing was 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., even when driving some miles. So possibly we hold the record for that mountain still.

I lived my first Christmas in England with an elder brother [Tom] at the foot of Mount Skiddaw [in the Lake District. – P.M.], and I used to run up this mountain, 3,000 feet I think, before breakfast. I got to know the mountain and I put up a time far faster than any tourists. One day I went up before breakfast and after breakfast my brother and I walked to Helvelyn and up it. A good day's work – over twenty miles on the flat and 6,000 feet climbing.

I walked all that vacation with my brother, and he came from 16 st. 10 lbs. to 13 st. 10 lbs., and I went from 13 st. 10 lbs. to 14 st. 10 lbs.

Amongst my escapades, the first rowing dinner I attended furnished a memorable incident. It was the Annual Dinner of the Thames Rowing Club, and I had not been long in England. After dinner at the Criterion, in London, we went outside, and there I and my

old pal Hutchinson met another Jesus undergraduate who had been in for the Army exam.

There was a large and noisy crowd walking round the “Cri”, the form of amusement in those days for lively youngsters late in the evening. Whilst we were talking I felt a violent blow on the back, and at the same moment “Hutch” said:

“Who are you hitting?”

“Not you,” was the reply as I got another blow.

I turned half round and hit the offender, who went down.

“Run like hell!” yelled the quiet Hutch. “It’s an inspector!”

The tone of voice frightened me. I did not know what an inspector was. In fact, it all happened so quickly that I never really saw the man. But it sounded to me as if an inspector were very nearly as important as the King of England, so I bolted through the crowd. I ran straight into another policeman and showed him I was not written down as “Victoria’s best football player” for nothing.

Two or three of our team had a very pretty way of passing one of the other side. We ran straight at him, shot the open hand out on to his chest, and slid it up, striking the body back and the head up. The result was much the same as a blow on the point; the man had to go down.

So I shot my hand out and went over the top of this policeman and continued my way down Piccadilly. The slush from melting snow was six inches deep. I lost my opera hat and one of my pumps. I looked round, and to my horror, the whole of the crowd seemed to be chasing me. I quickened my speed, and turned to look in front where another policeman was in the way. Out shot my hand and down he went. This happened twice more.

I was making for an hotel in Jermyn Street, and my turning was the second from Piccadilly Circus. I was charging down Piccadilly, where a horse bus was standing against the pavement, and I was working towards the pavement. Just as I stepped on to the pavement, close to the bus, I saw a posse of about twenty police which had been concealed by the bus. I swung back on to the road, but, alas, I was too near the bus, and I ran right into it and struck the far end, and was collared.

Five policemen led me on to Vine Street, two hanging on to each arm, and one behind, kicking me in the back. When I got there I gave my name, but would only give “Nakakaboubili”, Queensland, as my address. They put me in a cell, an awful place, with sawdust on the floor. My neighbours were mostly ladies, and they were a queer mixture. Half of them sounded as if they belonged to the opera and were rehearsing,

and half sounded as if they were bad sailors in a small boat in the Bay of Biscay during a storm.

Hutch had gone off to our tailor, Atkinson, of Brook Street, to come and bail me out. Before he got back, a Thames Rowing Club man, who was a householder, bailed me out, and whilst doing so, the Jesus man who was talking to us when the trouble arose was run in. Hutch appeared with the tailor, who bailed him out quickly, so he missed the opera and Bay of Biscay performances.

During the next day, Sunday, I went to my tailor, who had seen the charge sheet, and he told me that my case was put down as the worst case on the worst night since the closing of the Argyle Rooms. ["The Argyll Rooms was an evening club where prostitutes congregated to be hired by the wealthy. It was frequented by those who saw themselves, and were seen by others, as respectable gentlemen. The house was eventually closed for good in 1878." – Charles Dickens.] We went round and saw the police and apologised for spoiling their uniforms, and I told them to go to my tailor and get a new suit of clothes apiece. Of course I could not offer them money as that would be bribery. Then I was told that I should have to appear in the dock on Monday morning, and I was advised to wear my best clothes. I thought the dock was the stocks, and I pictured myself in a new top hat with my hands and feet sticking through posts and the crowd pelting me with rotten eggs. I was pleased when I found that I was mistaken.

There was a large crowd of prisoners. There had been a football match on Saturday, North v. South, as well as the Army exam, and the Rowing dinner, so there was an extra crowd out for a "spree" that night.

The famous rowing man, Piggy Eyre [W.H. Eyre, 1848-1939, stalwart of Thames Rowing Club during the 1870s, winner of the Grand Challenge Cup, 5-time winner of the Silver Goblets with Jimmy Hastie, and later historian of Thames RC. – P.M.] turned up to defend me, and in the course of the defence he said to me:

"It looks jolly bad for you. Can't you say something?"

So I put on my well-known air that gained for me the name of "Innocent Steve" at school, and briefly told the magistrate that I was hit twice in the back and I hit back, and, to my horror, I saw it was a policeman that I had hit. In my fright I ran away, but came to my senses and gave myself up. This saved me six months, and I was fined a fiver. We managed to get the name into the papers as Fairchild, and two hours after the case I was coaching the Cambridge 'Varsity crew. This item of news also appeared in the papers, and it went to show that Stephen Fairchild of the London Police Courts could not be Fairbairn, the Cambridge oarsman.

The most amusing finish to a race that I ever rowed was when rowing as a schoolboy for the eight of the Barwon Rowing Club, the leading club of Geelong – in their Regatta about 1879. We had centre station and on the sides were crews from the Corio Bay Rowing Club and the Melbourne Rowing Club; my two elder brothers [George and Jim] were rowing in this last crew. We were somewhat outclassed and fell behind. The two

other crews had a very good race. As they neared the winning post, our No. 5 began cheering on the Corio crew. This was too much, for me, and I began shouting for Melbourne.

Our No. 5 was our friend of the football field who once tried to bounce the sixteen-stone captain of the other side, which is amongst football memories. So it was a plucky and dangerous effort to cheer against him, and I expected to suffer for it. Soon afterwards, I heard No. 5 yelling, “Go it, Corio!” from somewhere up in the air. I was rowing No. 6, and looking round, I saw he had pulled his oar in and was standing on his seat. So up I got on to mine, and yelled for Melbourne, who just squeezed home, no doubt in consequence of my last yell. We were rowed triumphantly past the post, probably the only two men who ever finished a race standing on their seats. The other six rowed quietly on and never said a word.

Try to imagine an English crew doing that. It would be like a nightmare to them. It was no doubt a feat in watermanship to be able to do it. I was only a schoolboy and expected a thrashing from No. 5 for barracking against him, so I kept very quiet, dressed very quickly, and slipped away thankfully.

The closest and best race I rowed was in the Cambridge Trial Eights of 1885. At this time, I had coached nearly every college at Cambridge and knew their capabilities. I was helping the President to coach the Trials and rowed in one, as I always did.

I made out two crews at the beginning of Term and said to the President:

“We will go through the applicants for seats in the Trials, but here is the best way to row the two crews,” and eventually we rowed those two crews. I used to spend the whole day on the Cam, coaching and rowing, and I knew the value of most of the oarsmen.

On one occasion I started coaching a crew at 9 a.m. the last Saturday before the races when each crew rowed its final trial. I took crews till 7 p.m. and then broke the existing record for the course in the Jesus boat. I had ridden over thirty miles that day coaching.

I got one gratifying recognition when I took my degree. There was a very packed Senate House, and when I went up for my degree, I should think there were over a hundred men imitating Jesus cocks crowing, and the applause was so deafening I never heard a word of the degree. Jimmy Hastie, the old Thames Rowing Club oarsman [James Hastie, 1848-1897, a particular hero of Fairbairn’s, winner of the Silver Goblets in 1877, 1880 and 1881, author of “Genesis of Rowing”. – P.M.], told me the London evening papers said it was the most popular degree since Lord Byron took his.

We had in our Trial Eight my College Stroke and myself 7. We had just won the Grand at Henley, and as 6 we had the Cambridge 6 of the two previous years [E.W. Haig], my brother [Tom] 5, then First Trinity men 4, 3, and 2, and a Jesus man bow. The other crew had the famous C.J. Bristowe stroke, I think Barclay and Muttlebury 7 and 6, the following year’s Cambridge 7 and 6 and the Cambridge 4 at 4, and 3, 2, and bow Trinity Hall men who won the Grand in ’86 and ’87. So we were two hot crews.

Bristowe was a wonderfully successful stroke, the easiest man to follow, though, remarkable to relate, his blade entered the water very much after the others; as the other blades took the water his was high in the air. So there we have the most successful stroke apparently rowing quite out of time with his crew. It's time to say, "There are more things in rowing than are dreamed of in your philosophy, O Orthodoxio."

As regards body-form, Bristowe swung forward, swinging far into the boat when half-way forward, and far out of the boat when half-way back. He swung practically in a circle, so there you are, you who understand rowing! Can you explain why an oarsman whose blade was a foot off the water when the other blades took the water, and whose body swung fully a foot off the medial line each way, and whose blade was cut down to about half the size, should be the most successful stroke?

I went down in the train to Ely smoking a cigar, the intention being to make the other Trial think we did not mean to go for a blood race, and so hoping they would start quietly and let us get a good lead.

No. 6 and I got two screw-drivers and lengthened our slides two inches forward. It was in the best interests of rowing to show that a crew could win a long-distance race with longer slides.

In 1886 and 1887 all the Henley Regatta, with the exception of the Thames Cup in '86, was won by crews from Cambridge or Thames rowing on my lines – blade-work and not body-form, and practically all had been through my hands. Thames won the Grand in '88 and '89, and the two captains wrote me and said they owed it to the blade-work I had taught. In fact, every alteration made in rowing at Cambridge since 1881 has been made by myself.

First there was the introducing of long slides. Then I put the fifth arm on the rigger because I used to buckle my rigger – and finding it an improvement, I put it on all our riggers, and now it is universally used. The fifth arm, and the extra stiffness it gave, gave me an idea of how much bending movement of the rigger there was. Another proof of that was, the Thames boatman pointed out that I always opened the boat along the keelson opposite my stretcher by my rowing. To do this there must have been a lot of bending of the saxe board. I centre-seated the Jesus College crew in 1906 because it was easier to sit a boat and they were beginners, deficient in watermanship, not because it was a better mechanical device. Now nearly all boats are centre-seated.

I am now endeavouring to get swivel rowlocks adopted by all, as they are much better appliances.

Fixed seats are abolished in the Lent races, for which I have been struggling for a long time.

I also was Secretary of the C.U.B.C. my second year and started the Trial Eight cap.

To return to the ’85 Trial Eight race. We rowed for three miles from the bridge where the race now finishes to the next bridge. We had arranged to dash off at a hundred yards’ pace, get a big lead, and row a waiting race in front – as trial eight-oared races so frequently were more processions than races.

Off we went at thirty-eight to the minute in heavy ships, but to my surprise the other crew led us, though we were going remarkably well. They led by more than a bow canvas at the end of a minute or so, and to stop them going away, I had to call on our crew for an effort.

Every man rowing his last ounce, we slowly crept up and forged ahead about ten feet. Then began a series of spurts and counter-spurts. The other crew forged ahead, and I called once more and we forged ahead. This seemed to go on for miles, just like a swimming race with the two competitors swimming out of time, first one and then the other forging ahead at each stroke. After what seemed a very long time I caught sight of a tall chimney which I knew was only half-way, and I knew our crew could not get as far again with continuous spurts, so I gasped out to the stroke:

“Swing out, we’re only half-way.”

We swung out and settled down.

The other crew drew away inch by inch and looked as if they must leave us, but when they got three-quarters of a length ahead they stuck there. Our hearts were coming round and they were killing themselves trying to get away. I had made up my mind not to let their rudder out of sight, as when that happens the breaking-point soon comes. When I felt able to do so, I called on our crew, who were more than holding them, and we closed with them, got level, drew away, and got our rudder out of sight and stayed there for the last half mile.

Both boats drew into the bank and the sixteen men got out and lay down side by side, puffing and tired, but happy. Nothing gives such supreme contentment as lying down exhausted, and healthily recovering after a struggle such as we had had. No one said a word. We lay there for ten minutes, got back into the boats, and paddled home, and then I told the President that we had lengthened the slides. That was the end of short slides, which would never have occurred otherwise than by a revolt. It wasn’t unsporting really, as both crews got medals always, and no one thought anything of winning the race.

Indeed, the losing crew generally supplied most Blues, as it did that year. I was the only one in our crew who rowed in the next ’Varsity, and several came out of the losing crew.

That ’Varsity race, 1886, is one of the historical races. It was the first year the crews used long slides, and both crews broke every record over the short and long trials on their home courses during practise. The Cambridge crew did a trial at Putney in

nineteen minutes nine seconds, a record in those days, the course not being as fast then as it is now that walls have been built along the banks.

There was a bad wind blowing on the day of the race, and we (Cambridge) had the Middlesex station. We knew that we should have to get the Oxford crew's water before Hammersmith or we should have to meet some very rough water. It certainly looked as if it was a case of "take their water or lose." I knew the course well, having rowed with the Thames Rowing Club at Putney for a couple of years in the Regattas. I told the cox I would keep an eye on his course and signal him when to take his bends and cross, et cetera.

We started with the fixed determination of going all out every stroke and making every post a winning post. We got away very well and gradually began to draw out, gaining inch by inch, and had more than half a length at the mile, but from here we gained no more, and the station helping them at Harrods, or the Soap Works, as it used to be, Oxford began to come up on us and drew nearly level at Harrods, where there used to be a very pronounced shoot on the Surrey Station in the old days, favouring it much more than it does now.

Hammersmith Bridge was being rebuilt in '86. There were a lot of woodwork arches, and there was just room for two boats to go through abreast. In fact, both crews did a lot of practise, with scratch eights, steering through and through the bridge. As a matter of fact, there was a touch of our No. 6's oar and Oxford's No. 5's oar, so we were only a few feet ahead.

Oxford were favoured by the bend and the weather; the wind and the waves were so bad that we had to steer behind Oxford and chase them. They got away about a length of daylight. Then it came to the crossing to the Middlesex shore, and Oxford had to come into our water to get out of the sea that was raging in the tide.

Next came the question of going out for the centre arch of Barnes Bridge, and I looked round to get my bearings to tell our cox when to steer out, and was pleased when I saw Oxford in our water, with only about an umbrella's length of daylight. They were in imminent danger of losing the race on a foul, and of course they must have been straining every ounce to get further away. I yelled to the stroke and the crew and hoped for a bump, but we did not catch them.

After Barnes Bridge, I looked round to tell the cox when to steer in for the corner, and to my delight, I saw Oxford on the outside and only three-quarters of a length up. I yelled:

"All you know, Pitter [Frederick Islay "Freddie" Pitman, 1863-1942, stroke of the 1886 Cambridge Blue Boat, winner of the Diamond Sculls three months later. – P.M.], we've got them."

I let go at the next stroke, but the yell, the excitement, and the harder stroke nearly finished me. I reeled in the boat. However, Oxford came back inch by inch and we passed them shortly before the winning post, when we were a bow canvas ahead. I

looked at Oxford and eased up, but was ready to answer a spurt. I am certain that not one man in either crew was doing an ounce to move the boats. All were thoroughly played out, and we passed the post winners.

As we were being drawn in to the landing-stage, Cabby Rhodes [Jesus College], our coach, ran into the water up to his waist and shook me by the hand and congratulated me, and Nos. 6 and 7 and stroke were also very complimentary. My two “looks round” and yells made all the difference, and I was flattered when No. 7 and No. 6 said:

“I looked at your blade and tried to work mine like it.”

A minute after going up the steps Freddie Pitman said to me:

“Don’t you feel fit to race again?” to which I replied:

“Yes, I certainly could,” though possibly after a minute we should have been feeling the effects of the previous row.

My next reflection was one which I always like to recall – I felt sorry for Oxford. It always seems a pity that one side has to lose, yet defeat is apt to bring out a man’s character more than victory. In fact, one knows of odd instances of fine athletes who suffer from swelled heads, but these are few, because the athlete, as a rule, is of a fine, generous disposition, and the healthy rivalry of sport does much towards developing the character on sound lines.

I won the Schools’ Boat-race twice for Victorian Public Schools and got into the final on a third occasion. I rowed four times in the ’Varsity Boatrace, winning twice. I rowed five times in the Cambridge Trial Eights, and won the Inter-State Race of Australia in the Victorian crew – which the old coach told me years after was the best crew Victoria ever had.

Cambridge University Boat Races.
Jesus Coll.
Bow. J. E. HAYNE, 10.3.
2. F. T. H. BRANDON, 10.10.
3. H. ARMYTAGE, 10.8.
4. H. B. S. FOWLER, 11.11.
Coxswain, C. E. BISCOE, 8.2.
Head of the River,
June, 1883
5. F. STRAKER, 11.11.
6. A. M. HUTCHINSON, 12.2.
7. S. FAIRBAIRN, 13.1.
Stroke, P. W. ATKIN, 12.0.

Thomas E. Weil Collection

I rowed twenty-five times Head of the River at Cambridge and I rowed for the Goblets four times, twice during my rowing career. Once an unlucky foul beat us, and once we were beaten after one of the most enjoyable and best races I ever rowed, by a very good pair, rowing for the Goblets alone, whilst we were rowing for the Grand and the Stewards’ as well. [Steve is referring to the 1887 Henley Regatta where he and Hutch were beaten by half a length after a stirring comeback. Their opponents were Steve’s Boat Race teammates Barclay and Muttlebury representing Third Trinity. See below. – P.M.]

The other occasions on which I rowed for the Goblets occurred eleven years and twenty-two years after I had finished rowing. Eleven years after [1898] we were beaten in the final after leading and breaking the record to half-way. Then twenty-two years after [1909] I was only beaten with the college spare man by a length by the eventual winners.

In the first of these two races, that is, eleven years after my rowing career, we met and beat the Goblet winners at Kingston Regatta, three or four days after Henley.

I rowed many races in ’84, ’85, and ’86 in the up-river Regattas, and some grand races we had with London in the Eights, London having won the Grand in ’81, ’83, and ’84 and with Kingston in the Fours, Kingston being a winning Stewards’ Four; Hutch and I winning the Eights, Fours, and Pairs every time. I won the Grand in 1885 with the College Mays Boat, the only time that has been done. All other winning College crews have had old hands to strengthen them. I won the Stewards’ in 1886 and the Wyfolds my first year 1882.

Brittain, “The Jesus College Boat Club”

1885 Jesus College 1st Mays Boat
Head of the River, Grand Challenge Cup Winners

Top: 4 E.P. Alexander 12 st. 1 lb., Coach T.E. Hockin,
3 H.A. Armytage 10 st. 7 lb., 2 L.P. Bevan 10 st. 5 lb.,
Bow H.S.J.A. Sanford 10 st. 4 lb., 7 Steve Fairbairn 12 st. 13 lb.,
Bottom: Coxswain C.E. Tyndale-Biscoe 8 st. 9 lb.,
6 A.M. Hutchinson 11 st. 7 lb., Stroke C.H. Bicknell 10 st. 3 lb.,
5 J.W. Dickson 11 st. 2 lb.

One of my best performances was in Queensland. I had promised to coach the eight for the last fortnight before the Inter-State race. A few weeks before that I was in Brisbane, and took them for three days; I was rowing in a crew beside them and we raced them the three miles each day, beating them each time after three fine races. I had not had an oar in my hand for certainly twelve months previously, so these performances spoke well for my ability as an oarsman, and showed that the outdoor life of sheep-farming was a healthy one. My experience over long courses helped me to row three three-mile races on successive nights after not having touched an oar for a year.

My first school’s race was to my mind interesting as showing what can be done by steady practise. This is a point I would bring out in order to help all intending athletes.

Great improvement can be attained by practise, and consequently greater enjoyment for each subsequent row. But there is practise and practise. To go for a daily outing in a boat is of no use. One must concentrate on the work and try to improve every stroke one rows, and the improvement will be in proportion to the amount of concentration. Herein lies the art of coaching, concentrating the oarsman's attention on moving the boat. If the oarsman can concentrate on this, he will improve as fast as his athletic capacity will allow him. To my mind the best way is to concentrate on working the blade.

Our school four were young and inexperienced, but we gave up our Easter holidays and rowed the course every day. We were living in the country twelve miles from the river, and we walked in and rowed the course and walked back every day. We expected to be badly beaten, but we broke the record in a trial and won easily. So much for practise.

My first October term at Cambridge I started to scull. My first scull was to Ely and back. Coming back in the dark I struck a post and damaged my boat, and had to run the last six miles home.

My next scull was disastrous. It was the day after the 'Varsity Freshmen's Sports, where I won Throwing the Hammer and Putting the Weight. I went out with another man who could scull. It was morning and we were the only two on the river. He went ahead, turned, and the bows of his boat struck me within an inch of my spine. The bows snapped off and left two feet of boat sticking into me. The boat ran on the riggers, crashed, and bent, then our shoulders hit, and I went to one side of the river and the other man to the other.

It was the most unfortunate smash for me. The doctor did not look deep enough, and left bits of the boat in me. A blood cist formed and grew for thirty-five years, when a doctor operated and took out a blood cist bigger than a football. This gave me great pain at times, and lumbago and sciatica frequently. But it set up nervous dyspepsia, to which I have been a martyr ever since. The doctor told me my bladder was nearly closed by this lump and my stomach pushed out of place. I have never enjoyed real health since, and many hours of misery.

At Bedford during the last year in my regular rowing career [1887], I entered for the Sculls, Fours, and Tub Pairs, and I rowed in every other race of the day, rowing in the first and the last and spending the intermediate time between the races in paddling back, changing my boat, and getting to the start for the next race. I had three heats in the Sculls and three heats in the Tub Pairs and two or three heats in the Fours.

I had two brandies and sodas and a couple of biscuits to eat during the day, as I only got out of one boat to get into another and had no spare time for food.

We won all our races, but had a very hard race in the final of the Fours. We had beaten that year's winner of the Wyfolds at Henley in a heat, so, as there was also a winning Goblets pair there, the competitors were not too bad.

In the final of the Fours we clashed at the start, and that damaged our stroke's rigger, though we did not know at the time. We started again and stroke was soon in difficulties, and we had to struggle and just got home.

There was a ball that night and the girls kept saying:

"You must be tired, Mr. Fairbairn."

Of course I denied it, and hung on, dancing every dance. I woke at midday and asked for a big bottle of champagne and a biscuit, and I never saw a bottle go as quickly. I'm not sure the first mouthful didn't turn to steam.

The most remarkable race in which I ever rowed was the College Pairs with the coxswain [C.E. Tyndale-Biscoe, 8 st. 9 lb. – P.M.] It was in 1885. I was dissatisfied with the day's row in our eight, and as we were changing in the dressing-room the others were all speculating as to who would win the Pairs.

"You fellows win Pairs! I wish you'd do some work in the Eight. I am pulling you all along and the cox has the rudder against me."

That gave me an idea.

"You fellows win Pairs? The cox and I will win them."

As I was talking to the Eight who rowed Head of the River soon after and won the Grand at Henley, it was a big order to talk of beating them with cox in a pair. Of course I never expected to do it.

I put on a big rudder and a big fin to make her hold her way straight, for I was fourteen stone and the cox eight stone. We paddled down splendidly and got to the start. There were three starters in our heat, and we took back station as I expected we should get bumped in any other.

At the word go I started steadily, but the cox came with me so beautifully that I quickened, thinking we should do a good minute flash-in-the-pan and then probably break up, but we went simply wonderfully and passed the pair ahead of us. They were two Trial Eights ('Varsity) oarsmen. I saw we could beat the other pair, and I called out to the umpire, "I am going to let that pair win and claim to row in the final heat," as I could, owing to passing the other pair.
The umpire agreed and we let them win. They were two oarsmen of no great merit, but they had practised all the term and I thought that deserved some recognition.

We went even better in the final. I was rowing Stroke on the bowside, and from First Post corner to Ditton I went all out, having the huge Grassy Corner to pull the boat round. As we were sprinting round Grassy Corner, just shaving the bank, our cox, who was the 'Varsity cox, said to me:

“Oh, well steered!”

“Shut your mouth and row,” I yelled, as I wanted to gain all I could there. Ditton was coming, and he had to pull me round that, which he did wonderfully well, and we won. This was as fine a performance on the cox’s part as any oarsman ever put up.

Hanlan, the world’s champion sculler [Edward “Ned” Hanlan, 1855-1908, World Champion single sculler 1880-84, considered to be the first individual in history to take full advantage of the sliding seat. – P.M.], used to scull across the Thames with only one scull. Jimmy Hastie used to say:

“If you row perfectly true you do little or nothing to turn a boat.”

I always tried to get as much forward propulsion and as little turning as possible into my rowing. People who talk about No. 2 pulling Bow round in an eight, as is so often said, should realise that it is clumsy rowing that turns a boat. Clever rowing can also get a boat round the corners without the rudder. The Jesus Lent Boat did it at Ditton in 1926, and good Third Trinity crews have done it.

One does not need to win a race in order to enjoy it. In 1887 I rowed with Hutchinson for the Goblets. He and I rowed in over a hundred races at 7 and 6 in Eights and 3 and 2 in Fours. We were only beaten once when rowing 7 and 6, and that was in ’87 in the final of the Grand, which we lost by eighteen inches. This was only because the Hall’s crew’s oars struck the water just before the finish and we struck just after. Our boat floated out ahead of the Hall boat. We were beaten five times in Eights and Fours out of over a hundred races, and we did not have the pick of men with us, like Leander.

The race for the Goblets was against Muttlebury and Barclay, two very fine oarsmen. We got away beautifully, but they led us. We went as straight as a dart and the boat was running splendidly. “No pair can live at this pace,” I thought, but they kept just ahead. We rowed every stroke perfectly true and very well together, and I confidently expected the other pair to come back, but they hung on just half a length ahead. We were rowed to a standstill and stopped about one hundred yards from home.

I looked round and Hutchinson was in a glorious state of exhaustion. I gave a yell “Up!” and we had a last go, and a very fine spurt we made, but we were beaten by half a length. We were rowing in Eights and Fours as well as the Pair, and the other pair were not rowing in Eights, and possibly not in Fours. We were beaten by half a length in the final of the Stewards’ and eighteen inches in the final of the Grand.

One interesting occurrence in that training was the fact that our Stroke married about three weeks before the Regatta. He was given a day off for the wedding on the understanding that he was to go into ordinary training the next day. But from the way he rowed we suspected that married life was bad for his rowing, and I was deputed by the crew to see that he went into bachelor quarters. This I managed to effect, but at Henley the crew came to me in a great state to say that the bride had come to Henley and was

kissing him in the street. I had to rush off and find them and expostulate with them, and conduct them to the railway station and send her off by train.

The best race I ever saw rowed was a sculling race between Bill Beach [William Beach, 1850-1935, Australian blacksmith, World Professional Singles Champion 1884-87, the man who unseated Ned Hanlan. – P.M.] and Jake Gaudaur (or Jack Goodall, as the tongue-tied Putney waterman called him). They were two magnificent men and two perfect masters of the art of sculling. The professionals, sculling as they were for the world's championship, had eight-oared boats following them with a pilot sitting in the bow's seat facing the scullers. Tom Green, Beach's trainer, piloted Beach.

The pilot's method was to hold a handkerchief in the two hands, showing a strip of white about a foot long. If they wanted the sculler to pull to the left they held the handkerchief on the left, and vice versa, so that the sculler had only to watch the white band. If they wanted him to spurt, they used to push the handkerchief forward with a series of quick jerks. The race started by mutual consent, that is, both scullers looked at each other and gave a nod as they gripped the water.

Two high-class scullers starting by mutual consent was a sight well worth watching. Off they dashed for the lead at a fast stroke. I was in a Thames eight close ahead. In a previous race some men had interfered with Beach at Hammersmith, and I got an eight out to ward off any attempted foul play. In that race, Beach was sculling Bubear, England's champion [George Bubear, English Professional Singles Champion in 1887-8 and 1893. – P.M], in a heat of a three-mile race. A gig pair ran into Beach's boat and knocked a hole in it, and Beach sculled from Hammersmith to Putney, one and three-quarter miles, with the stern of his boat full of water and beat Bubear – a truly wonderful performance.

On the following day, Beach had to scull the final heat in a strange boat; they had smashed the other beyond repair. He won again. He won three three-mile races, and beat Wallace Ross [Canadian, the English Champion in 1888. – P.M.] over the four and a quarter mile championship course, and then Gaudaur, and he rowed the five races in a fortnight. What would modern 'Varsity crews think of similar work?

When Beach beat Hanlan in Sydney and won the world's Professional Sculling Championship for the first time, Hanlan was very surprised, as he had had several very easy wins just previously. After congratulating Beach on his victory, Hanlan asked him to scull him again. Beach consented, and Hanlan asked him when it would be.

"Oh," said Beach, "it's too late to-night – to-morrow or any time you like."

Beach won the championship more often than anyone, no less than seven times.

Well, Beach had the Surrey station, and Gaudaur Middlesex. They got away together, Beach got a length at the mile and had two lengths at Hammersmith, but Tom Green had been continually signalling him to spurt and had asked an enormous lot of Beach, who was sculling the faster stroke all the way. From Hammersmith Gaudaur quickened

slightly and sculled magnificently. He held Beach all round the bend and drew up inch by inch in Corney Reach.

Our eight had to row quite fast to Hammersmith to keep up, but a mile after that the pace dropped away and we were paddling light. Inch by inch Gaudaur drew up, the Station serving him. It was a race! The other men in our crew were shouting, backing Gaudaur, and I was backing my countryman, Beach. I had several ten shilling and pound bets with them. About half a mile from Barnes Bridge, Gaudaur drew level. Poor old Beach, hounded on by his pilot from Putney to Hammersmith to increase his lead, then from there he had the spectre of Gaudaur sculling magnificently and inch by inch wearing him down.

When Gaudaur drew level, both men were hardly moving. The crowd ceased yelling and gazed in breathless excitement at the marvellous fight. I remember distinctly hearing nothing but the pad-pad of the feet of the crowd running on the bank.

Gaudaur drew away till he cleared Beach. Then Beach coming forward stopped, his hands parted, and the sculls were three feet apart, the left hand right down and the right hand right up, and he all but fell out.

Tom Green urged Beach to go on several times, but Beach could not move. Then Tom said:

“Look at him. He hasn’t got away from you yet.”

Sure enough, there was Gaudaur struggling ahead and hardly going faster than Beach, floating with the tide. Bill looked round and started away quite lively.

The heart of a well-trained man comes round quickly, and he sculled a much faster stroke than Gaudaur and passed him, and then he stopped and nearly fell out of his boat again. The effort had tired him too much, and the heart “stopped”. Gaudaur dragged slowly away. Tom Green urged Beach to go on, but no, he could not. At last Tom said, “Think of your country, Bill,” and Bill, whose heart was freshening, went on, and passed Gaudaur and won. One thing was certain, if Gaudaur had stopped with Beach, Gaudaur would have won. He did not realise how they were both rowed to an absolute standstill. With all the slow crawling of the last mile, the time was twenty-two minutes twenty-nine seconds for the full course. It was the fastest time ever done in a sculling boat at that period, and it was never beaten until the walls were built along the banks, which made the course much faster.

The mile from Hammersmith must have been very fast, because the time from Hammersmith Bridge to Barnes Bridge was a record, and they were going very slow the last half mile, and Gaudaur was two lengths behind at Hammersmith, so his time would be about eight or ten seconds quicker. It was a glorious struggle.

The next morning I said to Gaudaur:

“You covered yourself with glory yesterday.”

“Perhaps,” he answered quietly, “but glory ain’t the dollars.”

Beach was thirty-eight years old then. Gaudaur won the championship ten years afterwards when he was forty-three years old.

I don’t think a man loses his powers till about forty, and many an oarsman has rowed well till about that age. Rowing and sculling are full of sleight-of-hand tricks that take many years to learn and that help the older man.

I passed a good deal of the latter part of the six years I spent at Cambridge with the Thames Rowing Club. Putney was very different then to what it is now.

The boathouse then was the last house on the bank, and there was a dreary stretch of bushes between there and Hammersmith. The policemen used to tell us that the beat between the boathouse and Hammersmith Bridge was the dreariest and worst beat they had. The bushes at night contained many drunks and criminals in hiding who might spring out on them at any moment, and they one and all dreaded it.

Though the boathouse was the last building, there was a camp of gipsies just beyond it where one could have shies at coco-nuts. The gipsies consisted of a man and his wife and their daughters and the children of the daughters. These children had the unusual experience that their father was also their grandfather on the mother’s side.

There were fields all round where the streets and houses now are. People used to crowd to see the Boat-race then as now, and long before the race started these fields were packed with people who got no nearer to the race, and, of course, never saw anything of it at all. They were quite happy, packed like herrings. They were “seeing the Boat-race,” and no doubt would go home saying it was better than last year. In just the same way people went to “see the Derby.” Many stopped by the first big barrel of beer, and even if one goes among the crowd at the Derby, one sees nothing of the races. These crowds and the joy they get are to Colonials always a marvel.

There was an old Lady Something who lived near Henley and gave house-parties for over twenty years during the Regatta Week, and after twenty years she got curious and asked what was the attraction of that particular week.

My first eye-opener was after my first Boat-race, which we rowed at 12 o’clock. We were lunching and our house overlooked the river. To my astonishment people were coming down from Town in launches for a couple of hours after the race was over to see the Boat-race – champagne corks popping, et cetera; they were enjoying the Boat-race!

My second race was a greater eye-opener still. We had two fields to cross to get to the Leander Boathouse; both fields were absolutely packed with people, and to my surprise, we did not interest them in the least, and although we had our blue blazers and caps on, and we told them we wanted to get through to row the race, they did not give way at all. The Cambridge crew cut no ice; they were there to "see the Boat-race," not to bother about a real boat-race.

Charlie Phelps [1859-1928, 1881 winner of Doggett's Coat and Badge, member of a dynasty of famous Thames watermen. – P.M.], still going strong at Putney, used to advertise in *The Sportsman*:

"The winner of the Boat-race given for half a crown. If the winner not given, you can have your money back."

I asked him one day what he gave them, and he said, "I tell the first one Oxford and the second one Cambridge, and no one has asked for their money back yet."

Alas! I hear Charlie has passed on – another spirit on the river.

In those days the Star and Garter [4 Lower Richmond Road, Putney. – P.M.] was a small tumble-down pub, and in the bar any evening one could get a free drink from one of the boatmen or a pal who had struck a winner. Some of the boatmen were rather freaks. Peter Green, the Thames boatman, was tongue-tied. We used to ask him who lived across the water, pointing to the Bishop of London's Palace. Peter used to say the "Bippop of Bubbub". One of the members was also named Peter Green, and it was fun to ask his name. Peter would say "Tete Teed." After getting him to repeat this two or three times, he would wind up, "The same name as mine."

One day on returning from a long scull Peter said to me as he helped me out of the boat:

"I've had a bit of luck whilst you've been out."

"What luck?"

"One of my children has died of bluemonia and tomplications (pneumonia and complications)." He seemed fairly proud of it.

On returning eleven years afterwards the old lot were all gone and the camaraderie of former days had disappeared, but Peter welcomed me back as a mate. It was common parlance:

"Peter you b——, who the b—— h——," et cetera.

Peter, having a mate, turned on them like a tiger.

“You go to Buddy l——. Mr. Paibain (me) and I will carry out the boats.”

At that Regatta I won the Garrick Pairs with my brother-in-law, who had done no previous rowing. Not bad to win after eleven years away and with a novice!

Mon Bush, the Steward of the T.R.C., was a character. I turned up for breakfast one foggy morning, and passed a woman dressed in black, with red eyes and a white face, standing at the water’s edge. I went inside and asked Mon what the woman was doing. He came on to the balcony with me and after a brief glance said, in a voice with no emotion:

“That’s a suicide.”

There were a lot of deaths by drowning, some accidents, and some suicides. I gave a man lunch one day in the boathouse. I had a sheep’s head and a bottle of claret. He joined me, and then walked up the bank to Beverley Brook [enters the Thames less than 1,000 ft. upstream of Thames R.C. – P.M.] and drowned himself.

Beverley Brook was so called because beavers used to inhabit it. I don’t mean men with beards, I mean animals. Several times I have seen drowned children brought from the Brook.

I remember once coming on to the tow-path and meeting a crowd, and one of the boys on the outskirts said:

“It’s a suicide, Mr. Fairbairn.”

One day we were standing on the balcony of the boathouse and we saw a drowned child pulled out of a small creek there used to be opposite the boathouse.

“Oh,” said Mon Bush, “children are always getting drowned there. There will be an accident there some day, and then they will have to take steps to make it safe.”

I suppose there must have been an accident, because it is covered over now.

Mon Bush had been a prisoner in the Franco-Prussian War and was nearly starved to death. I used to hand him my quarterly remittance and get money from him as I wanted it, till the day would come when he would say:

“It’s all gone, matey.”

Putney Bridge in those days was a quaint old wooden structure.

Harry Rust was another of the old Thames lot. He had an amusement. Of a Saturday evening he would pick up a Guardsman and try to balance him on those jaunty little

forage caps they used to sport late at night. The magistrate told him he must give up this amusement, as if he were brought up again he would get six months.

When Jesus College beat Gulston's crew [Francis Stepney Gulston, 1845-1917, one of the greatest British rowers of the 19th Century, 10-time winner of the Stewards' Challenge Cup, 5-time winner of the Silver Goblets and the Grand Challenge Cup, later coach at Kingston Rowing Club. – P.M.] for the Grand [in 1879], he said:

"Beaten by a lot of schoolboys! I will never row again."

The schoolboys were: Stroke, a four-years blue [Herbert Edward Rhodes, 1852-1889, Eton and Jesus, 3-time Boat Race winner, also a first-class international cricketer. – P.M.]; 7, a blue and a very fine oar; 6, Gurdon [Charles Gurdon, 1855-1931, Jesus College, Cambridge Blue 1876-80, 3-time Boat Race winner, 1879 Grand Challenge Cup winner. – P.M.], four-years blue and England's Champion Rugby forward; 5, Hockin [Thomas E. Hockin, Radley and Jesus College, seven times Head of the River, winning the Boat Race twice and rowing directly behind Charlie Fairbairn in 1879, later a coach for Jesus. – P.M.], winner of twenty-two oars; 4, a powerful blue; 3, next year's 'Varsity 5 [C.N.L. Armytage, Geelong and Jesus, later returned to Melbourne RC. See Chat II. – P.M.]; 2, next year's 'Varsity stroke [W.W. Baillie]; bow, a blue – fine school boys.

Charlie Gurdon once wrote to the papers, he told me, answering a letter about the good old days. He said in the good old days they used to put their top hats in lockers under the seats, and they had a piece of lemon to suck if their throats got dry, and the cox used to walk up and down a plank and thrash the crew to stimulate them.

The story used to be told of the first 'Varsity Boat-race, that after they had gone some way one man in the crew behind said he wasn't ready, and so they went back and started again.

Tom Hockin, with his white hair and loud voice, had more stories about him than there were about anyone else.

On one occasion he was sculling on the Cam and his scull hit some loose ice and he fell out. He went into a pub close by to get warm. Two navvies were standing in front of the fire, he pushed them aside and stood in the middle. One navvy remonstrated.

"Go to hell!" said Tom.

"I've been there," the navvy replied.

"What's it like?"

"Pretty much the same as here, the big swells get all the fire."

Hockin coached us when we won the Grand in 1885. He went to Marlow for the night because he said the police would get on to him, as they always singled him out as one of the rowdy ones. So he went away quietly and turned up next morning. The police

arrested him and proved he had thrown a horse and cart into the river off Henley Bridge. Tom was really pleased; of course he had not done it.

CHAPTER V

CRICKET

As far back as 1878 the Australian cricketers against whom I sometimes played told me that they learnt lessons from every game of cricket they played and the Englishmen apparently did not. This struck the Australians very much. I remember Tommy Horan [Thomas Patrick Horan, 1854-1916, played for Australia against England in history's very first test match in 1877. – P.M.] telling me how once, after a match against W.G. Grace [William Gilbert Grace, 1848-1915, "The Doctor", English, the sport of cricket's first great star. – P.M.], Spofforth [Frederick Robert Spofforth, 1853-1926, "The Demon", Australia's first truly fast bowler. – P.M.] woke him up at 2 a.m. to tell him how he would bowl W.G. out next time. Three balls were to do it – and they did! Later teams told me not only the same story, but that the English cricketers also noticed that the Australians turned defeat into victory by learning lessons from them.

The system of games-master is no doubt a good one, but these masters, instead of only drilling the pupils, should make teaching the young idea to use his initiative the foundation of their teaching.

The English character is summed up in a line in Gilbert and Sullivan's "H.M.S. Pinafore", when the ruler of the Queen's Navee sings: "And I never thought of thinking for myself at all." I don't say for one instant that I can suggest any improvement in the average Englishman, whom I have always looked upon as the finest human being I have ever met. When I came to Cambridge and met such people as Freddie Pitman I was very proud to think I belonged to the same race.

National Library of Australia

Jack Blackham behind his wicket

The first time I played cricket against an Australian XI, I went in first for the town. I was put in first because the others were too frightened to go in, I fancy. The other batsman took strike to Spofforth's bowling and was stumped [a way for the wicket-keeper to dismiss a batter by catching him unaware. – P.M.] by Jack Blackham [John McCarthy Blackham, 1854-1932, "the prince of wicket-keepers", played in the very first test match in 1877, later captain of Australia. – P.M.], with whom I played many matches for the Melbourne Cricket Club fifteen years later.

The feat of stumping appeared to me almost miraculous. The batsman made a chopping cut at the ball, a curious stroke of his own. He sprang into the air as he struck and his feet were off the ground for an instant. In that instant the ball was in Blackham's hands and the bail [one of two small sticks placed on top of the three stumps to form a wicket. – P.M.] on his finger. The quickness was marvellous, but the absence of hurry was what struck me.

Blackham used to take the ball with the hands moving forward and carry on and stump all in one movement, no doubt a movement due to intuitive instinct, far beyond the possibility of being taught, an instinct that civilization probably tends to destroy. I seem to remember my Classical schoolmaster telling me that civilization by producing Latin verse killed the poet.

Boyle [Henry Frederick "Harry" Boyle, 1847-1907, medium-pace bowler, known for his accuracy. – P.M.] bowled to me next over. The first ball I tried to drive to the off, and after hitting it, I ran.

"All right, it's a four," said Dave Gregory, the captain, [David William Gregory, 1845-1919, Australia's first national cricket captain. – P.M.] and I walked back to the wicket.

I was surprised to hear Gregory say to Blackham:

"That is the prettiest cut I ever saw."

I had never made a cut in my life. I had a good forward drive, and I suppose, partly through fright, I turned it into a cut.

Next ball I drove for two, and next ball I could have hit out of the ground over the head of Charlie Bannerman [Charles Bannerman, 1851-1930, batting first for Australia, he had the honor of facing the first ball and scoring the first run in test match history. – P.M.], who was standing very deep at long on. While in the act of hitting I attempted to pull the ball away from Bannerman – I was clean bowled. Blackham remarked to me as I walked away:

"You should never try to pull Boyle."

Besides being a miracle of a stumper, he seemed to read my thoughts, as I only started to pull the ball when half through the stroke.

I played against the next Australian team, and when I went in Spofforth was looking at the wicket.

"Give me one there," I said, asking for a halfvolley.

He said nothing and went back to bowl, and sent me down a very fast ball, absolutely on the spot I asked for. It was the only ball I did not expect. I hit too soon and I never saw a ball go so high out towards the boundary – and no outfield. Spofforth started after it and caught it on the chains as we were running our third run. I was out to the ball I had asked for, and caught on the boundary by the bowler! I wondered what sort of cricketers I was amongst.

One of the original Australian cricketers was a very good bowler but no bat. He never moved his bat out of the blockhole. On one occasion, in England, he actually made seventy runs this way. I doubt if Jack Hobbs [Sir John Berry Hobbs, 1882-1963, "The Master",

the greatest batsman of the era when Fairbairn was writing his autobiography. – P.M.] could do that with his bat always in the block.

It was delightful talking to these first Australian cricketers. They were very keen and full of humour. Once I remember talking to Harry Trot, an Australian captain [George Henry Stevens Trott, 1866-1917, played his first test match in 1888. – P.M.]. We were walking behind one of the original eleven, who had got very fleshy.

"What a spot he would make for a bowler if he burst on the pitch!" said the Australian captain.

On one occasion I was picked to play for Melbourne University, though still a schoolboy, against Sydney University. For some reason they picked very hot sides for that match, not confined to men in residence. The rule was that anyone who had passed matriculation examination for the Melbourne University could play for his University, and we passed the matriculation when at school. I caught one captain of an Australian team (Garrett [Thomas William Garrett, 1858-1943. – P.M.]) out off the first ball and ran out another Australian captain (Scott [Henry James Herbert "Tup" Scott, 1858-1910, captain during the 1886 test match, then retired to pursue a medical career. His nickname came from his love for London sightseeing tours which cost tuppence. – P.M.]), off the last ball of the match – a pretty good first and last ball effort, especially as the last was on my own side, so I won the match for the other side. I was chosen to play for my bowling. The choice lay between George Palmer, and myself. As Palmer bowled for the next Australian team, it was a great triumph to be picked before him, as I was only a schoolboy.

One of the most peculiar things that ever happened to me was in a match for the Melbourne Cricket Club. I snapped the monkey muscle [plantaris. – P.M.] in the calf of the leg – a muscle the human race used for climbing trees before they wore boots. This was painful, and I could not put any weight on the left leg. I was batting with an Inter-State player, and as there were two Inter-State and four International players to come in, I consulted him as to advisability of retiring.

He said, "Stick to it, you are doing very well." So I went on.

I could not put any weight on my left foot and batted entirely off my right leg, and was astonished at the ease with which I patted the ball to the boundary. I had a man to run for me, of course.

It was lucky I did not go out, for there were nine wickets down at close of play, and our side was behind, so by staying in I saved the match. On coming out I was asked what my score was, and replied:

"I fancy between twenty and thirty."

Imagine my astonishment on reading in the paper that I had made over seventy, which was easily top score.

There were two conclusions I drew from this innings. One was that to have a man to run for you was a great help, and the other was that the body should be held still to watch the ball properly. The old idea of holding a young batsman's leg down with a hoop in practise was similar, and no doubt not running helped me greatly.

Fast running between the wickets loses far more runs than it makes. A brother of mine once told me that on the day following an all-night dance he was batting against Boyle, the International bowler. He hit the first ball and ran four. He made up his mind to hit the next ball out of the ground, but the ball played a dirty trick. Just as it left the bowler's hand, it broke into a lot of bits owing to the fast running after the night's dancing, and he hit the wrong bit and was clean bowled.

This brother could hit a ball. Playing on a hard ground once in a country game, I was in with him. He hit the first ball for eight – there were no boundaries – and the next ball for seven. The last hit was further than the first as there were two men returning from the first hit, and consequently they were nearer the ball.

Fred Kruger

Aboriginals playing cricket c. 1877

I remember seeing a black boy who had been fielding at a cricket practise running across the pitch to the pavilion. A ball was driven past him. He fielded the ball and then threw it to the bowler, all in one action. He took the ball from behind instead of putting his hand in front to stop it, as a white man does.

Black fellows are wonderful throwers. One Australian black has thrown a cricket ball one hundred and forty-five yards, the best throw by a white man being many yards short of this.

Blacks throw a short, pointed stick, called a nulla-nulla, to kill their game, and so have great practise in throwing. The fact that the black has beaten the white man so easily at throwing the cricket ball means much greater proficiency. In other words, they have timed the movement much better. To throw one hundred and forty-five yards would require the cricket ball to leave the hand with very much greater velocity than that required to throw it one hundred and twenty yards. Again I say the moral for all branches of sport is that practise makes perfect.

It is not every one that knows that the first Australian XI that came to England [1868] was made up entirely of blacks. The manager of the team, a white man, told me of the trouble he had with them. They would not play if the weather was too cold, and they would refuse to play because they wanted to wash their flannels. I played with one of them, Johnny Mullagh [born Unaarrimin, 1841-1891. – P.M.]. He was a very fine cricketer. Mullagh used to let anyone throw balls from twenty yards at him as hard as he liked, and he would stop them all with the bat. Victoria, playing New South Wales, once included him. He made a good score, about seventy runs, and probably had not had a bat in his hands for years previously until just before the match. He was brought straight from the bush to play.

In one match I had just come in to bat and played the last ball of the over and started to run. There was a very easy single, but the other batsman evidently wanted the strike, so he refused to come. He hit the ball the next over, and called me, but he found me sitting on the handle of the bat with my back towards him. I told him as he would not run for me I would not run for him. If he wanted to score he must hit boundaries. There was only a quarter of an hour to play, and we hit lots of boundaries and put up a good score.

It struck me then that two free bats could score far faster by only taking boundaries. Not only does fast running disturb the eyesight and spoil the batting, but also each batsman would only have one bowler to play. The moral is that as batting beats bowling nowadays, there should be no boundaries. Making the batsman run everything out would give the bowler a better chance.

While playing cricket and football with the town teams when a boy, I learnt that suggestion plays a strong part in games. I remember once bluffing a bowler to take himself off – no less a personage than Frank Laver [Frank Jonas Laver, 1869-1919, "crude and unorthodox, (who) could thrash even classy attacks." His first test match was in 1899. – P.M.], who had paralysed English batsmen just before. As I was taking guard, I asked him if he was a brother of Charlie [Charles William Laver, 1863-1937. His first test match was also in 1899. – P.M.] and Arthur, and he said he was.

"Well," I said, "Arthur says he is the best bowler in the family. Let's see what you are like."

It was the last ball of the over. Luckily it was a small ground, and though I pulled the ball badly it went out of the ground for five. He was captain, and rested himself next over.

On one occasion I drove eleven miles to catch a 6:30 train, which took an hour and a half on its journey, then I breakfasted, and had a fifteen-mile drive in a hansom, in order to play in a cricket match which started at 10 a.m. I was in fine batting form, too.

Going in first with the captain, I took strike. I played a ball straight to where the umpire usually stands at the batsman's end, and as a man was standing there in plain clothes and another man in flannels four yards in front of him, it was safe to assume that the ball was going to the umpire, so I started to run an easy one.

I was half-way down the pitch when the other batsman said, “Go back.”

It was too late. The plain clothes man was a fieldsman, and I was run out first ball.

In the second innings I took strike again. First ball was a full pitch to leg. I smote at it very hard, but just too soon. The ball hit the back of the bat, then my left pad, and then the calf of the right leg, and then the wicket – two funny ways to get out.

A few days later I was telling this to Bob McLeod, an International cricketer [Robert William McLeod, 1868-1907, played in six test matches between 1892 and 1893. – P.M.], and I said:

“Two balls in two innings is about a record.”

“Look at me in this match,” he said, “run out twice before I had a strike.” So my record was easily beaten.

That was an extraordinary match they were playing. It was an important game, as the winning side would fly the pennant as being the most successful side of the season. These matches were only played on Saturday afternoons, and if the two innings were not played out in a certain number of afternoons, it was decided by the first innings. The side that was batting was behind on the first innings, but only wanted a few runs to win and had several wickets to fall. It looked a certainty for them, but during the week the other side practised bowling grubbers with a tremendous bias on them. I heard about this event, and went to argue with the captain as to the sportsmanship of the proceeding. No doubt bowling very fast grubbers plain and straight would be very hard to score off, and with a spin they would be even harder.

A grubber, as possibly some may not know, is a ball bowled along the ground all the way. They practised and learnt to put a big spin on the ball which clung to the ground with no semblance of a bounce in it.

The captain’s argument was that his first duty was to win the match, and he must employ every means that he could to attain this object, provided they were permitted by the rules of cricket. He granted the method might be called unsporting, but, he added, they would forget about that and the victory would remain.

To my mind the point is a very fine one. No doubt most of us would say we must let our sense of sportsmanship prevail, but if party feeling were very high, no doubt there would come a time when one captain after another would say:

“I am going to do all I can to carry out my first duty, which is to win the game.”

Or suppose it is near time and only a very few runs have to be got, and if these runs are not secured then that side loses instead of winning the match. Would not the captain put on the bowlers best able to keep the runs down?

Or suppose there is very heavy betting on the match?

Again, suppose the captain is very anxious to get the rules of cricket amended and feels bowling grubbers the only way to obtain a rule, say, as follows: “Any ball pitching short of half-way shall be no-balled.” Isn’t he acting in the most sportsmanlike way by bowling grubbers? Those were his arguments, and they are strong ones.

They bowled their grubbers and not only did the other side not score enough to win, but they all got out, some in the vain endeavour to get the ball away, and some beaten by the bias. The balls were about the pace of a medium-paced bowler and the bias was such that a ball spinning from the off and one spinning from leg would be fully twelve feet apart at the widest point.

The worst sportsmanship I ever experienced in a cricket match was when I was asked to join a side of cricketers to play against the three leading Melbourne clubs.

“If we lose the toss,” I said, “we will field all day,” as these other teams were much stronger than we were.

The promoter of the matches said he had arranged for our side to bat first as we were the weaker. That seemed all right, and I went in first and took strike.

The mud kicked up from the first ball, and I saw the wicket was unplayable. It had been watered and not rolled. We got out for very few runs. The wicket was then rolled out perfectly, and we fielded for the rest of the day after having made ducks. I was quite satisfied with that one match, and did not play in the other two.

I once played in a match on matting on a showery day. We adjourned for refreshments. This adjournment coincided with a stoppage of the rain, so the captain of the other side proposed that we should always adjourn for drinks between the showers, which we did. It was the same captain who bowled grubbers and made the wicket impossible for the side batting first. He it was who told the team not to reply to a certain incoming batsman, who had a habit of chatting all the time to the field, and making very big scores. The batsman came in and began as usual:

“Give me centre and leg, umpire, not wide to leg as you gave me last time.”

No reply from the umpire.

Next: “Good day, Mr. Wicket-keeper. I see you are still out of gaol. How do you manage it?”

No reply.

“Hullo, point, does your mother know you’re out?”

No reply.

Slip [A slip fielder is placed behind the batsman on the off-side of the field. – P.M.] was addressed in the same friendly way.

No reply.

The batsman was completely upset and was clean bowled for a duck.

This captain was recognised as the cleverest captain among the serious cricketers. He was a groundsman. But he met his match when he played the Jockeys' and Trainers' cricket team, captained by an old friend who sold me a steeplechaser which he had sold probably to half the ordinary racegoers. (I tell this story under "Horse-racing Reminiscences".)

This man was bringing a team of jockeys and trainers to play cricket, and as they neared the ground the question arose how to make sure of obtaining first knock. He told seven of the best to sit in the road under the paling fence that enclosed the ground, and he marched into the pavilion with the tail end of the team. He first inquired if the other seven had arrived, and being told that they had not, he suggested that they should be put in first so that the match could begin, and he and another man went in to bat. After the first ball was bowled, he emitted a loud whistle, and the other seven men jumped over the paling fence and walked across the ground.

This reminds me of the story of the Jew and his son who were in a queue waiting to get on to their bus. When they got to the front, and their bus arrived, pretty full, a big rough man pushed them on one side, jumped on the bus, and away it went, leaving them standing.

"Wasn't that man very rude, daddy?" said the son. "Will God punish him?"

"God has punished him, my boy, I have got his watch," the father replied.

How nice to be able to take watches and to be God's instrument to punish people!

This same captain once asked me to lend him £50. I sent him a cheque, and played in a match in which he was captain of my side. He did not put me on to bowl, which surprised me. A few days later he thanked me for the loan (which he never repaid) and said:

"I would have thanked you (put you on to bowl) when I met you at the last match, but I had not got your letter and I thought you would not lend me the money."

I was highly amused. It takes all kinds of people to make a world.

Here is another instance when the ground was not rolled in the morning after being watered at night. It was customary to put on a certain amount of water in the dry weather the night before a match, and then roll out the wicket in the morning. If the wicket was rolled in the morning, the pitch would be very good, but if not, it was practically unplayable.

On this occasion the wicket was watered the evening before and it promised to be a very fine wicket. I won the toss and sent in two of our school to bat, without looking at the pitch. I had played with the school and town teams for several years on that ground, and the wicket had always been rolled in the morning, so I thought it must be all right.

It was a very important match, the last of the season, and whichever school won it would be champion school for the year. I went in second wicket, and the first two batsmen got out very quickly. I asked the returning batsman what was wrong:

“You’ll soon see when you get to the wicket,” he replied.

I did.

The first ball kicked horribly and jumped straight at my face. I turned round; it hit me between the shoulders and bounced on to the wicket. We were out for a small score. The wicket was then rolled and the other side on a good wicket topped our score.

Then came the trouble.

If the two innings were not finished, the match would be won by the other side on the first innings, as it was a one day’s match. In our second innings we scored freely and proved ourselves far the better side, but time was running on, and the longer we stayed the more likely were we to lose on the first innings.

In those days there was no rule that one could close the innings, so I went out and told the batsmen to knock their wickets down, which they did, much to the amazement of the other side. There was only three-quarters of an hour left, and the other side were sulky and refused to come in. I told them if they exceeded the time-limit I would claim the match. They dragged in sulkily. The three best men would not come in and were left to the last.

Last over was called and three wickets to fall. I think I put up a record that over which will stand for ever. I crossed over, having bowled the previous over, and bowled the three wickets, and we won the match. The rule was that a bowler could not change his end more than twice. To do this, he could bowl three consecutive overs if he liked. A bowler cannot bowl two successive overs now.

In one match, I remember, the umpire at my end had given not out to two batsmen successively, when they were both out. The second decision was disgraceful, so I ordered the umpire off the field. He was an old boy of the other school.

I told my young brother [Fred] to umpire, and gave him simple instructions:

“If I say, ‘How’s that?’ you say, ‘Out.’”

I thought it was equity to get two wickets back. I was about the biggest man in the Victorian football world, and introduced the fundamental rule, “Might is Right” without fear of contradiction. Curiously, my young brother said “Not out” to my first appeal.

The most amusing of all the umpires’ decisions that I ever heard or saw, occurred in a friendly game in Central Queensland: the Sheep Farmers v. The Town. The captain of the town side was resplendent in a billycock hat and a pair of tweed trousers. He was a great autocrat, and known as the “Great I Am”. I was bowling, and we were all chaffing “I Am”, who was “getting his shirt out.” I bowled a ball which passed very close to the wicket and the bail dropped off. I was puzzled, as the bail did not come off just at once, so I appealed to the umpire to get his opinion as to whether I had bowled him or not.

The umpire gave him out. I walked down the pitch to announce the decision, as pandemonium had broken loose.

The wicket-keeper, slip, and point were all at it hammer and tongs with the batsman. What had happened was that the ball had rebounded from the wicket-keeper’s pads and stumped him. The bats-man was well out of his ground, but the umpire the other end gave him not out.

The field were telling him he ought to go out and he was arguing that the umpire had said not out, and he turned to me and said:

“You must abide by the umpire’s decision.”

I had no idea what the row was about, and said: “Very well, my umpire says you are out.”

The amusing part was that the batsman, wicket-keeper, slip, and point would not listen to this at all, and so “I Am” stayed in. I fancy it was a record in decisions to be given out by one umpire when he wasn’t out, and to be given not out by the other umpire when he was out, and not to go out.

The square leg umpire had, up to this point, said nothing but “Not out.” He now said he had given it “Not out, stumped” because he had heard the other umpire give him “Out, bowled.”

No doubt he had not been looking, but it spoke well for “I Am” to stay in after our umpire had given him out and the other said he only said not out because the other umpire had actually given him out. A relation of that umpire played for Australia. He was a very good runner and backed himself to run a bye off the first ball. He started from the

bowler's end. He actually got his bye – it was Australia playing Colombo [Sri Lanka. – P.M.]. It was in the days of "donkey drops" [pitching the ball on the stumps from as great a height as possible, preferably with the ball descending behind the batsman. Now illegal. – P.M.], the slowest bowling ever practised.

"I Am's" billycock hat was out of place in a cricket field if worn by an ordinary cricketer, but he was chairman of the Divisional Board – a very high position – and he had been in the twenty-two at Eton, he told me proudly.

I remember that match. I had ridden in fifty miles to play. When I arrived, I asked the boss of the store where the cricket ground was.

As I walked towards it, I thought I ought to have shaken hands with the storekeeper, as he was a leading townsman.

When I arrived on the cricket ground, my side was in the field. I recognised an outfield as I passed him and shook him warmly by the hand. Of course, he turned out to be the boots of the hotel. After the match, one of the young clerks said audibly:

"Introduce me to Mr. Fairbairn, Tuck, I would like to know him."

Equally audibly Tuck replied:

"Perhaps Mr. Fairbairn wouldn't like to know you."

I once got up a match specially for a young man who had just arrived from England, who said he was a good cricketer. When he came in to bat he had only one pad on, and when he faced the bowler the pad was on the wrong leg. He got bowled at once, and I asked him how he came to say he was a good cricketer, and he said he had only played on board ship, and they told him he was a good cricketer.

At school we used to get the non-bowlers to throw [an illegal bowling action which occurs when a bowler straightens his arm when delivering the ball. – P.M.] instead of bowling in practise. A throw was hard to play and very good practise. Why not allow bowlers to throw? I used to offer a leading cricket enthusiast this and many other suggestions for improving the game, and he used to shudder to I think that anyone could be so sacrilegious as to think of changing cricket. This is an English attitude of mind. Cricket (and things generally) must not be changed.

It is taking the line of least resistance. No doubt there is a great deal to be said for the devil you know being better than the devil you don't know, but it is tending towards fixed ideas, and fixed ideas lead to strait waistcoats. I think if throwing were allowed, and the wickets were an inch higher, it would improve cricket, especially the extra inch on the wickets. I have always advocated this. The best ball often goes just over the bails.

Talking of rules, there is a very senseless rule in cricket, that if a batsman strikes a ball twice and then runs, he is out.

W.G. Grace

The Australians told me the rule was made by W. G. Grace, when an Australian batsman hit a ball twice and then ran. W.G. said to the umpire:

“How’s that? You know if a batsman hits a ball twice and then runs he is out.”

“Out,” said the umpire.

It certainly seems far too severe a penalty. If the better opinion thought that runs should not be scored this way, surely it would be better to have it that a batsman cannot score off a ball if he hits it twice? A curious point was once raised. A ball struck my pad and went up into the air. As it came down I hit it out of the ground. The umpire gave me a boundary, but there was a dispute. One authority said I was out for hitting the ball twice.

The most extraordinary match I ever played in was at school. During our exams I was told there was a cricket team outside, representing themselves as St. Patrick’s College, and they had come down to play us. They had put us off on a previous date, so there was something unusual about it. I saw them and they said they were the St. Patrick’s XI. I told the Headmaster, who was very angry, and at first refused to let us play. However, we played them. During the match, the wicket-keeper told me he had played for both “Heton” and “Arrar.” I felt a little doubtful. Soon afterwards he asked me, “What was the match between?”

By this time I had no doubt. Evidently they had come from Melbourne to play a side and the match had fallen through, and some one had told them to try us and say they came from St. Patrick’s College.

One of the most amusing experiences that I had at cricket was when I took my team of gardeners, gamekeepers, and villagers from Brickhill over to Tring to play Leopold Rothschild’s team.

Bert Tooth, the village carpenter, well under five feet in height, was our fast bowler. I was fielding slip both ends. Bert hit the batsman on the pad, and I was surprised that he did not appeal. After crossing over I asked Bert where the ball was going.

Bert replied, “It would have taken his middle stump.”

This surprised me, and I asked him why he did not appeal.

The answer was, “It is young Mr. Rothschild, sir!”

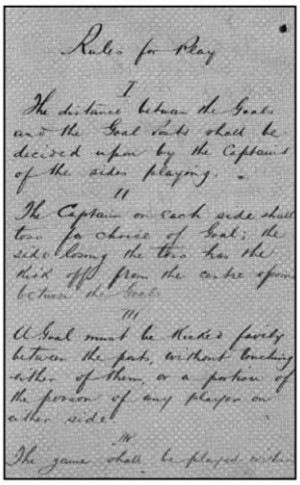
Of course I had not taken that in.

“But, Bert,” I said, “you ought to have appealed. I am sure young Mr. Rothschild would not like to know he was out and you did not appeal.”

Bert did not understand this at all, and I am sure nothing would have convinced him of the truth of my remark.

CHAPTER VI

FOOTBALL


Rules for Play

I

The distance between the Goals and the Goal posts shall be decided upon by the Captains of the sides playing.

II

The Captain on each side shall toss for choice of Goal; the side losing the toss has the kick off from the centre of the ground between the Goals.

III

A Goal must be kicked if only between the posts, without touching either of them, or a person of the person of any player on either side.

IV

The game shall be played with

[Of the various forms of "football" worldwide, **Australian Rules Football** was the first to be codified. The rules were written down by the Melbourne Football Club in 1859, and the document still exists. – P.M.]

My first football club match was played when I was just fifteen years old. It was the last match of the season, and was to decide which club was the champion team for the year. It was the last match played on the Melbourne Football Ground. We won, and the Melbourne *Argus* said I played the best game of the lot. It was in September 1877.

I played for that team the following three seasons whilst still at school. One newspaper notice I used to get chaffed about said I was "half the game" in a very important match.

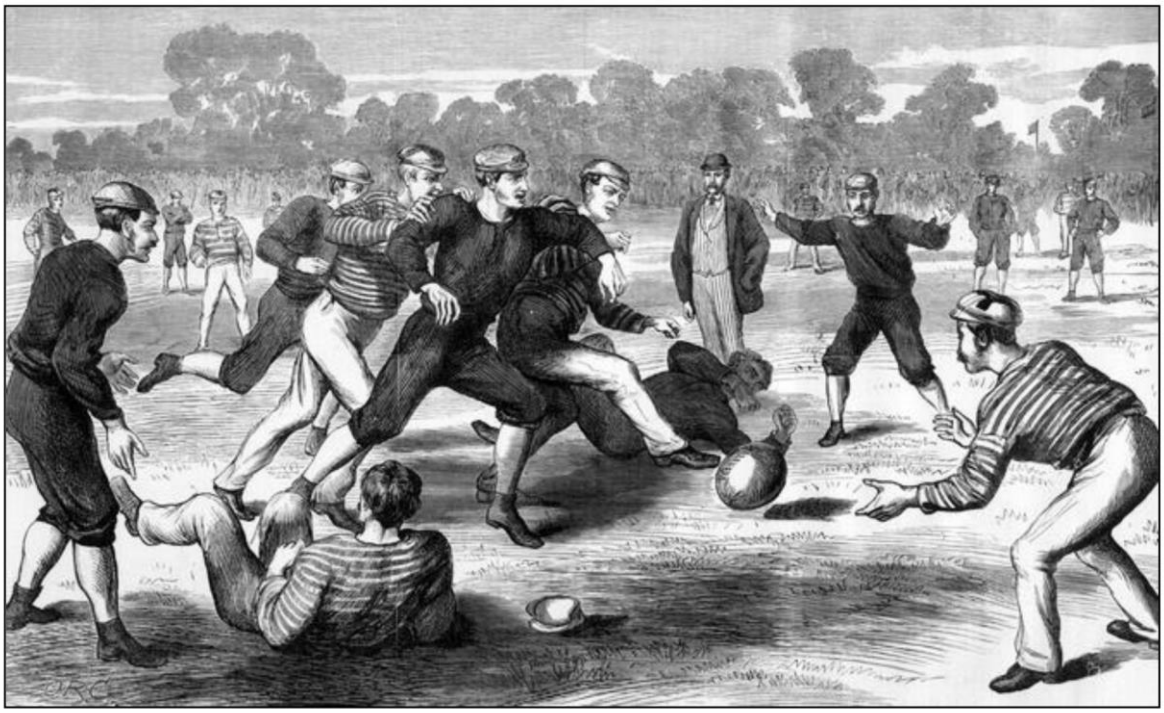
I was in Melbourne a few years ago and some of the old leading citizens were talking about my first match. My eldest brother [George] has often told me that he got many votes for Parliament owing to my football, and that was about forty years afterwards. I asked good judges how we compared with the New Zealand All Blacks, and they said we were the better side. Anyway, we were a good side. I was chosen to play in the first Inter-State Match in Australia. My first match was for our third school team against the neighbouring school team. I was for the first time the proud possessor of a pair of flannel trousers, and didn't I strut in them! I was congratulated by many spectators after that game.

I found I was possessed of a sort of trick that was disastrous to the person who tried to collar me. He seemed to go rolling on the ground, turning over and over for no apparent reason. I was really as much surprised as the other person. At first I thought it was an accident, but it happened continuously, and I tried to find out what really happened. It was when I was running with the ball, and a man went to collar. I put the ball low and elbows close to my sides, and as I felt my assailant's arms tightening, I hoisted my shoulders above my head with a dislocating movement (I was a regular freak in the gymnasium when doing the dislocation. I was double-jointed). The result was, the arms tightening to throw me met in the empty air and the thrower fell and turned somersaults.

I got the daily paper and read an account of this match. I shall never forget my horror when I read:

"Fairbairn III was ubiquitous." All the world went black. I looked at everyone to see if they knew that I had been "ubiquitous". It took me a long time to recover from the shame, if I ever fully recovered; the word has an evil sound for me even now.

I thought of the people who had congratulated me on my game. Why did they? Well, that was easily explained. No doubt they saw I was ubiquitous, and probably heard others “cussing” me for being ubiquitous, and being friends of mine, they were sorry for me and tried to cheer me up. I determined to live it down and become a good footballer, and two years after I was mollified by reading I played the best game of the two sides for our town team in the last match of the season.



But I rarely read a report of a game afterwards. I read one year in the *Australasian Post*, a Melbourne weekly paper, that I was the best forward player in Victoria, being put second in order of merit. I told one of our masters, and he replied that *The Melbourne Leader*, the other weekly paper, said I was the best player in Victoria.

The first match I played for the town, in which *The Argus* gave me pride of place, is worth describing. I used to look upon the members of the first team of the town as gods, and never dreamed a young player, living down his ubiquity, could ever get into such a team. To my surprise I was chosen to play in the team, and it was a very important match.

After a short spell of play, I was put into goal. In front of me were our captain and vice-captain, each minding a forward of the other team. What made our game so good was that there was no offside rule, so the teams went to different places all over the ground. A man would kick the ball forward from anywhere. The ball was kicked down to our backs, and I left the goal, marked the ball, and ran with it and kicked it into the enemy’s half. I repeated this three or four times and the captain and deputy asked me if I could do that always, and I said, “Yes, it was very easy.”

They went forward and left me in charge of the goal and the two forwards of the other side. By going forward they won the game. That was good work for a fifteen-year-old boy and fairly flattened out “Mr. Ubiquitous”.

I never lost a game for the school team or the town team during my last three years at school. Our school team was a very hot side. One year we had twelve boys each over twelve stone in weight. We beat all the public schools, but a private school in our town also had a very hot side, and we played a series of drawn games for two years. At the end of the second year we played an extra match and just won it. The excitement ran very high over these games.

The town team always had a huge audience. Many special trains brought spectators. It used to be said there were 19,000 people in the town and 20,000 came to see the matches. The two schools played a combined team against the town team and beat them. There were fully eight of us boys in the town team, so our playing for the schools weakened the town team.

We had many interesting football matches, one of which I recall. We were a very quiet team, never played rough, stuck to the rules, and thereby won, but on one occasion one of our side said to me:

“I’ve got a dreadful fellow to mind. He plays very rough and breaks the rules badly, and I don’t know what to do.”

So I changed places with him, and found a very short, thick-set player, who was very objectionable. I could do nothing with him, and reported him to the captain. The captain took him on and also had to put up with some dirty work for some time.

At last he could stand it no longer, so he picked him up by the shoulders and bashed him to the ground. Up got the nuisance, hand up, appealing for a free kick. The umpire had not seen it, and gave no free kick.

“What are you appealing for?” said our captain.

“For slinging by the shoulders (a breach of rules).”

“Well,” said our captain, “you little ——, do you think I am going down on my knees to catch you round the waist?”

It really was poetic justice.

We went up to Ballarat and played a combination of the five clubs there, playing twenty-five of them to our twenty. Twenty was the usual side in those days. Originally, in Rugby Football, one town played another, with unlimited numbers, as many joining in as liked.

The men were rough miners. A grand stand had been erected for the ladies, but they left the ground in the first ten minutes. The language of the crowd was too bad.

The crowd encroached on the ground and their tempers became more and more hostile to us, and it looked as if we should be lucky to get off the ground alive. At last the captain's brother cross-buttocked one of the other side, who whirled round like a windmill and crashed to the ground. When Billy began cross-buttocking, it was generally a signal that a free fight was near. I marked the ball and had an easy goal to kick. In our rules, a man can place the ball well behind the spot it was marked on and kick it. The other side must not come over this spot and can't rush as the ball is being kicked. One of the other side rushed in as I was kicking, and I stopped and told him he was a fool. He went back.

The crowd were closing in in a nasty manner and there was no time to be lost. As I went to kick, he rushed in again, shouting as he sprang in the air, expecting me to kick.

"Am I a fool? Now!"

"Yes," I said, "you are a —— fool!"

I did not kick, but ran on a step and met him with an open hand on his chest with a warding-off blow. This movement had a very quieting effect on the man. I stepped back, kicked a goal, and won the match, which was now over, as the crowd rushed the grounds.

"Shoulder to shoulder," cried our team, and we formed up in two ranks and marched off the ground, being pelted with stones and turf by the crowd. We got into cabs and caught the train and saved our lives.

Another wild match we played was against a team of factory hands. This club had just come into the Victorian League and was playing in the matches for the championship. It had played two matches and won them both, against two of the best Melbourne teams. These two teams complained of the behaviour and foul language of the factory hands, and asked the League to disqualify them, but we asked to be allowed to play them and try to beat them before they were disqualified.

We played them. I must mention one great supporter we had, the father of our captain, who always turned up in a frock coat and top hat. I doubt if there was another frock coat in the town.

The captain of the factory hands was a huge man, sixteen stone in hard condition. He played centre. Our centre was a lively customer who loved a fight and would try to bounce the other side by picking them up and hurling them on to the ground. Different people have different amusements. This was his fun.

I had the task of keeping our centre man quiet, and gained a great but quite undeserved reputation from it. In one of the other teams was a very noted boxer. He had stood up to Jem Mace [1831-1910, English, one of the first prizefighters to compete under the Marquess of Queensberry Rules, lived in Australia from 1877 to 1882. – P.M.] when world's champion. These two were centres together, and I had to slip in between them and soothe our man down occasionally.

The match began. Our orders were to keep cool and play football and do all we could to win. Of course, we knew it was bound to be a free fight, but we were to try and get a goal first.

The match progressed, the other side getting rougher and rougher, and we more and more deadly in earnest to get a goal. The sixteen-stone captain charged into our man, who kept his temper splendidly. We got a goal. The other side got rougher. The centre man charged our man harder. We got another goal.

Twenty-five minutes gone.

Their centre man charged again, but it was the last time. Our man gripped him by the seat of his shorts and the back of his neck, lifted him to the full reach of his arms above his head, and fairly hurled him on to the ground, where he lay stunned.

The crowd charged the ground, both factory hands and our supporters, a frock coat and top hat in the lead; with a right and left he flattened out two of the other team, and both his sons had their man flat on the ground. Then started a free fight and pandemonium broke loose.

The police took us off in the "Black Maria", but just before they put us in, our centre man picked up one of the crowd, who was offensive, and threw him clean over a six-foot fence.

All that night the town seethed with excitement. If a footballer appeared he was chased by a hostile crowd. Rumour said they took refuge up chimneys and other places. That game finished the factory hands; they were turned out of the League.

We always stuck to football, but on one occasion our captain passed the order round to play rough, as the other side were behaving badly. We gave a magnificent exhibition and broke up the other side in no time. Our team were an exceptionally quiet lot, and this exhibition surprised me and the other team.

Only once did I let myself go in a school match.

One of our opponents had been very rude during the week. He went for the ball directly it was in play, but I charged him and at the same time another of our players charged him, both with the intent of keeping him civil in future. We broke his arm with the impact

within a minute of the start – not bad work. After the match we saw him and told him it would not have happened if he had kept a civil tongue in his head.

This boy played for Melbourne Football Team afterwards, also his brother, who was a very fine player. On one occasion they were standing about twenty yards away from me on either side of me. The ball had been kicked and was coming straight for me. I stood still to mark it, and delightedly watched the two, out of the corners of my eyes, charging me, for I knew that the ball was coming a yard or two over my head, and would arrive about the same time as my charging friends.

It is wonderful how quickly and accurately the subjective mind apportions the time of meeting of moving objects.

On charged my crashers, and with a final dash they hurled themselves at me. When they were within inches of me, I stepped back and marked the ball, and they crashed into each other and stunned themselves. That evening in the train they told my brother I was a real gentleman. This was because I in no way referred to the incident. If I had said, “You two were silly to run into each other,” I should have been no gentleman.

One memorable incident on the football field comes back to me. This was an instance of rising to the occasion. We were playing the best Melbourne side and they were attacking our goal, the only game in which the other side showed a distinct superiority over us, and something must be done.

The ball was mostly near our goal and never came far down the field. At last the ball was kicked to me. I was loose forward and was situated about the centre on our right wing. The ball was going about twenty yards past me. I was obsessed with the thought, “I must mark that ball and get a goal and we will win; if I don’t, we shall lose.”

I fled in the direction the ball was going, watching it over my shoulder, watching one of the other side also racing to mark it. My senses were super-active. I had to mark it high over my head. I could feel my thigh muscles standing out elastically as I sprang into the air and marked the ball.

Then, whilst in the air, my plan of action flashed through my brain. If I stopped and took my mark, I was beyond possible distance of kicking a goal, if I landed and ran on to kick it, I must be collared, as I was only a few yards from the other man. I must land and swing to the right, as if thinking of passing, and then check as if going to stop and take my mark, draw the other man’s thoughts to the right, or his left, first, and then relax him by checking, and, swinging to the left, pass him, run ten yards, and kick. I was inside the other man’s brain as well as my own.

I swung to the right, I checked and he relaxed, and I dashed on to the left, his relaxing just allowing me to pass him. I drop-kicked the ball clean through the middle of the posts – a goal kicked from seventy yards. It was the most perfectly timed kick I ever made, and the ball described a perfect parabola. I used to try to time the kick just as the ball

touched the ground. I had noticed that if one struck the ball just as it was on the ground it would go without one feeling any weight. We did a lot of practise kicking, as it played a very important part in our game.

One of our schoolmasters was the longest kicker I ever saw. I could beat anyone but him. He and I used to practise together, and he would beat me by about five yards every kick. We were entered by our club to kick for the kicking championship at the Melbourne Sports, and, though this man knew he could kick farther than I, all our football team told me they were sure that I could beat him in the kicking match. He was not good in a match and I always did best in sports, owing to some peculiar fillip the excitement gave me. For instance, practising high jumping, I used to go 4 feet 10 inches and never more, but always did 5 feet 2 inches in sports.

Unfortunately, the day fixed for the kicking was during the school exams, and I could not get away.

There is one performance of mine that possibly still stands as a record. Our team came up to play a Melbourne team. They changed in their special train and arrived in their football togs. I had gone to Melbourne the night before. I went into the dressing-room to change, where there was a tremendous crush and they were all talking excitedly about their plans. Being in plain clothes, they didn't recognise me. The plan arranged was: "All to rush forward if they won the toss and try and force a goal." I told our captain when the team arrived, and suggested I should go on one wing and another of our forwards on the other wing, and that the ball should be passed to one of us and we would have a good chance of a goal.

They kicked off. Our captain got the ball, kicked it to me, and I kicked a goal, all done in twelve seconds. The reporters told me afterwards they had not put their watches back from timing the kick-off.

I have often thought of the noise in that dressing-room and the perfect confident stillness of our team. We were never bustled, nor made any noise. A perfect businesslike quiet pervaded us always. The Victorian eight-oared crew were another lot of similar unassuming, quiet men, and they, like our team, were successful.

All my life I have had a strong dislike of all horse-play and ragging by a crew or side, and it only now dawns on me that the real reason was because ragging and all noise is merely a form of funk.

The following was written about the match where I kicked the goal described:

> Ten thousand together, ye knights of the leather,
> Though wintry the weather, to cheer you along;
> The grey sky is o'er you, the green turf before you,
> I don't know what more you could want but a song.
> A song with a rattle that tells of the battle,
> That tells of the knocks and the shocks of the fray;
> Of kicks that slow soaring go goalward, and scoring

May settle the fortune or fate of the day.
The Carlton mean winning, and faith there's no sinning
In those who are pinning their hopes to the Blue.
Well trained and no lumber in one of their number,
With Coulthard and Gardner to pull the match through.
But the dark blue and white are the twenty to fight,
And none have been able their colours to lower,
A team strong and wiry, with play fast and fiery.
So dauntless and vauntless they come to the fore.

I forget the description of the game, but it goes on:

Played Wilson for ever, a gallant endeavour
To carry lone-handed the fort of the foe!

And all well together, they pass the ball back.
Now Fairbairn has gripped it and through he has ripped it,
A forty yards goal to the Grammar School crack.

Played forty for ever! a better game never
Was fought to a finish, as all have allowed,
For pluck and good kicking, for hard to it sticking,
Play all for the side and none for the crowd.

One thing we rely on, if foes should e'er try on
A game that is sterner than football to view,
When bullets are flying and comrades are dying
Our boys to the bright Southern Cross will be true.

The "so dauntless and vauntless they come to the fore" was a very good description of the way we walked on to the field.

The description of my "gripping it and ripping it" just hits the action truly. A "forty yards goal" shows the perfect flight of the ball. The goal was fully seventy yards. The "ten thousand together" were twenty thousand at least, the ten was to scan. We always played under a packed audience.

I remember when the cricket clubs were forced to throw their grounds open to footballers, owing to being hard up. It was thought it would destroy the turf, but they had to get money. But it improved the turf and turned the cricket clubs into rich clubs. I hear English county clubs are hard up. Why not try the same remedy? If there is any doubt about it, let them go and look at the Jesus College (and many other) grounds towards the end of the winter after football has been played on it. I have seen the hockey ground almost black. The play improves it, and the turf is all the better for it.

Chapter VII

SHOOTING

If asked what sport I have done most of, I would answer, shooting and dancing.

If I were asked, “What do you consider the highest form of athletics at which you were proficient?” I should unhesitatingly reply, “Tops.” Tops are a most difficult pastime and require touch in the highest degree, as well as perfect timing, balance, and control.

It isn’t every one who has had the opportunity to play this difficult game, and to few is it given to become really proficient. To go thoroughly into details would require a book to itself, but I will give the rudiments of the game.

You challenge another person under ten years old to play tops and you spin him for first shot. You spin your tops simultaneously and the one that spins longest has first shot. You then draw a ring and put an equal number of tops in the centre. Then the one with first shot spins his top. He fires the top to hit one of the other tops and knock it out of the ring. If he knocks one out and his top also spins (that is where the art comes in) he keeps the one he knocks out. If the top doesn’t spin he puts it back.

Spins are turn about. Sometimes the game is played thus: If the other player can split your top whilst it is still spinning, he gets the knocked-out top. Of course, you try to knock the best top out first. If there is a “boxer” in the ring you naturally go for it first, as it is made of very hard wood (box wood). People play tops up to about twelve years old. I can remember thinking people over twelve who gave up tops were past the prime of life and getting senile because they began to talk to girls.

But enough of tops. It is shooting that is the present topic. Still, spinning a top is a form of shooting when one’s object is to knock out another top. It teaches one to aim.

Kicking a football at a goal, bowling a cricket ball at a wicket, all are engendering the idea of shooting. Using a catapult to kill birds is an advance in the stage towards shooting with a gun.

I used to be the champion shot with a catapult, or shanghai, as we called them. We used to have regular matches to see who could kill the most birds on Saturdays in the bush; I always won.

My best performance with a catapult was at my father’s country place. He had a lot of young plantations round the house and he complained of the magpies breaking the branches, wishing he could get rid of them. I at once made a very powerful catapult, and for ammunition I melted some lead, ran it in a slot, and cut it into small squares.

I sallied forth in the moonlight and got a magpie between me and the moon, the same way we used to shoot ’possums, though ’possum shooting was more spectacular,

because when one fired, one saw a sheet of flame right from the gun to the ’possum, and the ’possum drop.

I stretched the catapult and fired. The magpie made a dull noise and dropped dead. In great excitement I ran into the house to show my father.

I went back and shot another; the same gurgle and flop to the ground. I brought it inside and was more excited; I got a third, very excited; a fourth, not so excited; a fifth, less so; sixth, less so; seventh, I felt so disgusted that I never touched a catapult again. I think it was the effect of the strange strangling sound they made that sickened me. I felt, like Alexander, that I had no more worlds to conquer. Seven magpies in seven successive shots was a record.

But shanghai or catapult shooting is aiming at a fixed object, and shooting with a gun, at a moving object – although I remember very distinctly firing with my catapult at a flying sparrow and cutting its head clean off, so that the body and head dropped separately. I thought it a great fluke, but I must have instinctively fired the right amount in front of the bird to hit it.

I began, when I was four or five years old, by handling an old, single-barrelled, muzzle-loading musket that my second eldest brother [Jim] told me was used by the Duke of Wellington in the battle of Waterloo.

It was a wonderful weapon. Frequently, when we were loading, the ramrod would stick, and we would fire up into the air and watch for the ramrod to fall. Sometimes, when overloaded with shot, the powder would blow the hammer back, and I have had a piece of the cap blow into my cheek. But the great art was to pull the trigger very carefully, and when the hammer was released, to let the trigger go and catch the hammer on the half-cock.

I learnt a great deal with this gun, aiming and learning to draw a bead, and practising to pull the trigger and release the hammer, and then release the trigger instantly and catch the hammer on the half-cock. This last was a most difficult operation, requiring great delicacy of touch and almost incredible rapidity of action. This handling of a gun, no doubt, was a fine education for future shooting.

One day Tom filled up the gun with powder, and remarking “Powder does not hurt,” went out into the quadrangular yard. He fired the weapon, and was astonished to find himself knocked on to his back. There was a black mark a foot in diameter on the wall against which he fired!

One holiday Tom and I were staying with an elder cousin. We used to take a gun and go shooting for the day. We found two strange old pistols – I afterwards learned they were heirlooms – and we took these, without permission, to shoot little birds. I was carrying the gun, and I went to cock my loaded pistol to shoot a bird. Whilst cocking, my finger slipped and I shot my hand badly. Not only my hand but also my coat was riddled.

I suppose that, as my finger was slipping, I turned the pistol across to the other hand to help to cock it. Anyway, my hand was in an awful mess. I looked at the hand; the top of the middle finger blown off, and a huge gash two inches long in the palm, and blood and smoke all over the member. There was no sensation at all of pain.

My father had just had his right hand cut off. I said to my brother:

“That hand will have to come off,” and he said, “It might not.”

“Well,” I said, “the middle finger must.”

“Oh yes,” he said, “that must.” I was not going to let my father have it all his own way.

Now our trouble wasn’t how much of me was to be amputated, but how we were going to get the pistols back and not be caught using them. We agreed to say I had done it with the gun, and so my brother fired off a barrel. Afterwards we noticed the other barrel was blocked up with dirt. Our cousin was very inquisitive about how we did it. We arrived with my hand in a handkerchief, which I held behind my back, as I wasn’t sure that I might not get a thrashing for blowing my hand to bits.

I was taken to a doctor some miles away. He strapped up the gash in the palm, snipped off the protruding bone of the finger, strapped that also with sticking plaster, and sent me home. The hand would not heal, so I pulled off the sticking plaster, and two large pieces of paper that I had used for wads, and several shot rolled out. There are still a lot of shot in the wound. Obviously the doctor made a very cursory examination. He died of D.T.’s within a month.

My brother and I were still uneasy about the gun with dirt in the loaded barrel. If our cousin saw this, we were afraid he would find out about the pistols. One night we heard a ’possum up the chimney, and we were relieved when we saw the cousin take the gun and shoot it, and so clear the mud off the barrel. Of course, this might have burst the gun.

On one occasion an elder brother gave me a flask of powder to take into the gun room. This was full of all sorts of things, including kites, guns, catapults, silkworms, and cocoons from which we unwound the silk. My sister aged four (I was six) was with me. Before handing me the flask, my brother poured some powder on his hand and threw it on to a small fire, where it exploded. After my brother had gone, of course I went one better, and poured the powder direct from the flask. The flask burst with a stunning explosion. It was copper, and was ultimately found over two hundred yards away in one jagged piece.

My sister and I had our heads close together looking for the flash as the powder went on to the fire. I looked at her. Her face was black, the eyebrows singed off, and I was

black also. My sister said she was blinded, and I saw a great cut between my thumb and finger, where we had been told a cut gave lockjaw.

I started, in a dazed way, to walk into the house, and met the nurse. She screamed on seeing me with blackened face and bleeding hand:

“What’s happened? Where’s Jessie?”

I replied, “She’s blinded and I’m lockjawed.”

Collapse of the nurse into the hedge.

We were given oranges and had our faces oiled to soothe the burning, and were heroes. It was well worth the explosion.

On another occasion a cousin and I had a toy cannon. We filled it with powder and put it muzzle downwards into the ground to see how big a hole it would blow in the earth. We lit the powder with a match, and that was the last we saw of the cannon. Of course the explosion blew it into the air, and luckily it did not hit us.

I used to spend my holidays with an uncle of mine who had six young children, and some of my brothers were there as well. We were allowed to go shooting, and I was off with a gun directly after breakfast and would never be seen till nightfall, when I arrived with some wild duck and possibly a snake.

The first occasion I shot was with one of my elder brothers. We drove out in a buggy to a dam where there were some wild duck. We pulled up and I jumped out, and my brother handed me out a gun, which I loaded and cocked. He at once jumped on me severely for cocking the gun, and ordered me to put it on half-cock, which I did. He spoke to me as only an elder brother can speak when, in a few brief sentences, he is instilling into a younger brother’s mind something never to be forgotten.

Just as I had half-cocked the gun, up got two huge birds a few yards away in the long grass. They were wild turkeys.

“Fire, for God’s sake, fire!” said my brother.

But the gun was half-cock, the birds were new and marvellous to me, and I was altogether too flabbergasted by the talking to and the appearance of these birds to cock the gun quickly and shoot; so the birds flew away and I was in disgrace. Each bird was about as big as I was, for I was only seven years old.

We proceeded to the dam for ducks. We crept up the bank to get a close sitting shot if possible, but the ducks rose too far out and wheeled round. As they flew round I fired two barrels and dropped two ducks. They were the two ducks I fired at, and they were the first shots I had ever fired. Then I was a hero and a very proud man.

So I began my long daily rambles with a gun. I would walk from dam to dam all day long.

When I went Cambridge I shot grouse during several of my vacations, and it was generally remarked that for a young man I was exceptionally good at driven grouse. The reason was that when shooting at wild ducks I got somewhat similar shots. I soon learnt that my best chance of getting a good shot was to get out into the water to my waist, and stand behind a tree with the gun barrel held up against the tree. The ducks saw every move, and especially a move of the gun which glistened in the bright sun. Learning the fact that the less one exposes oneself or moves the better, was a great help to shooting.

But what taught one most was the fact that although one fired at the leading duck, one yards further back would drop; that corrected one's aim, and it was this that taught me to shoot driven birds.

One develops a sense in shooting that helps very much, especially does one develop it if one starts young. One learns not to make oneself conspicuous by moving or wearing bright attire, and one learns the different flight of different birds, et cetera.

As I have said, I did a great deal of shooting, and so, with naturally good eyesight, I became proficient. One man I used to shoot with in my later days always put me where he wanted the birds stopped, although one of the other guns had the reputation of being the crack shot of the county.

We used to have big rabbit shoots, getting a good many guns together and walking them up in line.

At these shoots we used to have little sweeps at lunch, shooting bottles thrown into the air. One of my elder brothers was very good at hitting them, and I told him I found it hard.

"Come on," he said, "I'll show you how to do it."

To my astonishment he picked up a rifle, and on my remonstrating, he said:

"It's just as easy to shoot them with a rifle as with a gun. The art," he added, "is gauging where they will turn and shooting them at the instant of turning whilst stationary."

With this thought in my mind I soon found I could hit them with a rifle on the turn, and after about twenty shots we were shooting at a tin can at 100 yards with a penny as a bull's eye. The penny was invisible at the distance, but we hit it frequently.

Perhaps the Thames Platoon of the 1st Corps of Volunteers of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry will understand how I could hit the stamp at twenty yards in some competitions we used to have during the War.

My uncle once said to me, “Get the Government House people, and any other unemployed you can find, to come down to shoot rabbits on Saturday.”

He had wire-netted his property, 20,000 acres, with a rabbit-proof fence, and wanted to exterminate them. He had all the burrows filled in, and the rabbits were sitting out in the long grass. I got a good many guns, a brother also got some, and so did my uncle. Altogether we were twenty-one guns, and marched in a line about a mile long. I ordered 7,000 cartridges, and there were another 6,000. These were put in an American wagonette and the man drove the wagonette up and down behind the line, calling out, “Cartridges,” and one dropped back to replenish one’s supply as the wagonette passed.

The rabbits were thickest between the wagonette and the line, so we must have walked over many thousands. The fusillade was practically continuous all day, and when we got to a fence we would catch the rabbits and kill them in hundreds, and then on to fresh ground. We killed several thousand. Recently I heard of a boy whom I had got out to Australia being at one of these big rabbit shoots where they killed 19,000 rabbits.

I will give two instances of how thick rabbits were in Australia. When a boy, in about 1875, I was riding along a road in the western district of Victoria towards sunset, and I noticed if my horse’s hoofs struck a stone and made a noise many rabbits’ ears would be cocked up at once. So I pulled up my horse and shouted, up went the ears in myriads. I am sure I saw over a thousand pairs of ears go up in the long grass, though there had not been a sign of a rabbit before.

About 1879 my father opened a letter and laughed. He told me it contained a cheque for £500, a sum he received from a small rabbit-tinning factory every six months. He and two others had put in £500 apiece to start this factory, so they got 200 per cent. per annum out of it. He told me they bought the rabbits to tin for a penny a dozen. The owners of the property were exterminating the rabbits by trapping, and the trappers were glad of any market.

Rabbits were introduced into Australia by Austin of Barwon Park [Thomas Austin, 1815-1871, an English settler who introduced to Australia many species from England as a member of the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria. In 1859, he introduced 24 breeding rabbits as game for shooting parties. They soon became a ubiquitous pest. – P.M.] not so many years before this, possibly thirty, but not more, I fancy. Occasionally the Governor of Victoria and a party were asked up for a day’s rabbit shooting, and the Governor was allowed to shoot two, and the others one, apiece – and thirty years later they were in millions.

In Australia rabbits breed all the year, save two months, and have a litter every three months, and the next generation begins breeding very young, so in two years a rabbit would have six generations of young. It is said in Australia that two couple of rabbits

would breed 2,000,000 in two years. Nowadays 80,000,000 are killed annually as vermin.

We used to shoot ducks on Sundays in Queensland. We would get some of the townsfolk out to shoot, and shoot up to a hundred ducks in the day. Sunday was our only day, as we worked from daylight on Monday till dark on Saturday.

I remember we were talking about shooting right-and-lefts one evening over our whiskies after one of these shoots. One of the party said he had once shot a right-and-left of foxes. My brother said:

“I can beat that. My killing sheep were down to two, and we could not yard them, so after many ineffectual attempts, I got a gun and hid behind a bank and shot them with a right-and-left.”

My manager I thought never shot, so imagine my surprise when he chipped in with:

“Once I got a right-and-left of dogs.”

"Did you?” I said. “I thought you never shot.”

“Oh, well, I tied them up first!” he replied.

Loose dogs on a run at lambing time could do great damage, chasing mothers away from their lambs, when hundreds would be lost. It was a crime to let a dog stray, and whenever my manager caught one, he would hang him on the road as a warning.

When I came back to England in 1897 I took a Scotch shooting. We stayed a day or two in Edinburgh. My brother-in-law was with me, and he was very keen on shooting. I told him that I was practising by imagining myself shooting every bird I saw flying.

One of the most amusing incidents I can remember was when I was shooting partridges with a friend Tom. T. B. was to arrive from Scotland and join us at mid-day.

T. B. was a crack shot, and Tom said:

“T. B. will have a stand after lunch where the birds come very difficult.”

Sure enough the birds came over T. B., and he missed them all. He came up to us and said:

“Tom, your birds are too short.”

I was shooting that day with an umbrella seat which the family had given me as a birthday present, as a joke. Another present the family gave me was a silk dressing-gown, which I paid for when the bill was presented for the third time.

It came on to rain heavily during one stand and I used the umbrella as an umbrella, and I learnt something which I had suspected before. As a covey flew over, I threw the umbrella down, shot a right-and-left, changed my gun, another right-and-left, flicked my umbrella overhead. All done with a lovely rhythm thus: umbrella down, bang, bang, change gun, bang, bang, umbrella up

My loader was my chauffeur and was a magnificent professional shot, having beaten the champion professional in pigeon-matches. In fact he made enough money shooting in pigeon-matches to learn to be a chauffeur.

The other guns congratulated me on my shooting, but I knew it was on account of the umbrella hiding my face, the birds could not see it, and so could not read my murderous intention. Therefore they flew straight, and were much easier to shoot!

I have illustrated the same thing since by putting up a screen in front of me with a hole I could see through, and have shot partridges. I tried this, and it makes the best possible butt.

On my first trial I was shooting by myself and my first seven shots got seven partridges, all very easy shots. Without the screen they would have avoided me altogether. I recommend these screens to anyone – a piece of canvas, best of grey colour, three feet wide and two deep, with a small hole to look through, and two sticks to hold it up to a height one can easily hide behind. It can be carried from stand to stand easily and will improve the bag enormously.

And remember, the first maxim of partridge shooting is, if you want to increase your partridge crop you must shoot partridges.

I first suspected that birds saw one's face in the butts and read one's intentions from the expression thereon, when I noticed that frequently a grouse would fly over the butt and nearly knock one's hat off when one was loading, and the birds never came so easily when one was loaded. Evidently birds read danger when one is loaded, and that must be from the expression on one's face. So as the partridges did not see my face under the umbrella, they came easily to me.

In the same way I am sure dogs read one's thoughts. I had a retriever with me always in the butts, and other guns, after the drive was over, would often ask me to run my dog for a bird they had down. I soon got to divide guns into three classes. The man who always had a bird down when he asked for the dog; the man who was doubtful; and the man who never had one but hoped the dog might find one. To all I would run the dog in the same way, a flip of the fingers and a "Hie lost!" at the spot where the bird was supposed to have fallen. If the bird was that of a man I felt sure had one down, the dog would work willingly and get the bird. If of a man I was doubtful about, the dog would work half-heartedly and soon stop; and if of a man I felt had no bird, the dog would just roll over and never work at all. After a couple of years it dawned on me that although I

put the dog to work in exactly the same way, he nevertheless read my thoughts and worked well, doubtfully, or not at all, according to my thought.

One year I shot every day of the shooting season except two. On one of those two days I travelled from a grouse moor I had to one my brother had, and on the other I travelled from Scotland to an English shoot I took.

People who don't know, talk about pheasant shooting as being easy, but the pheasant is a more difficult bird to shoot than he looks. The high, overhead pheasant commonly called the rocketer is the easiest. The reason is that he travels straight on, trusting to height and pace for safety, whereas a pheasant flying low is often hard, although he looks very easy, as he twists and does not travel straight. Then the beaters are probably in the way, and one waits till he goes by and fires at the tail, while the vulnerable parts are protected. If the conformation of the ground is suitable, one can throw the pheasants over the guns out of range if one likes.

It is not a bad thing to give the guns a very high stand early in the day. They will probably get another chance at the birds later in the day.

I remember shooting at a rabbit, when we had twenty-one guns shooting, from what looked an impossible distance, and to my, and every one else's, astonishment the rabbit turned over dead. I stepped the distance; it was eighty-one yards. I fired fully twenty yards ahead of it, probably a shot struck the brain through the eye, as it was really a very long way out of range.

Shot travels fast at eighty yards. On one occasion several of us undergraduates were shooting in Scotland and we had an argument as to whether shot would hurt at eighty yards. We put a handkerchief hanging loose on a clothes line and stepped off eighty yards. We fired one shot with No. 4 shot from an ordinary 12-bore gun. The hand-kerchief was knocked off the line and five pellets had drilled clean holes through it.

I had a moor in Caithness-shire – in fact, two adjoining moors. It occurred to me that it was an ideal place for boys to learn over dogs. The two moors ran to over 25,000 acres. The heather was patchy, small bits mixed with grass, and the grouse would run and run and took a lot of getting up. They were impossible to drive, and sometimes one would follow the dog pointing for half an hour before getting a shot.

The grouse were very knowing. They would rise behind one's back when one was jumping up a bank where peat had been cut.

One Twelfth of August, "Hutch" and I shot together, and we walked up wind all day, shooting. In the evening the keeper took up the dogs and we had an eight-mile walk home. At once we felt very tired and could hardly drag along, when a dog broke loose and pointed. We were up at once, all tiredness gone, and we ran a dog all the way home and all tiredness disappeared.

I did some rook shooting during the War. My chauffeur fitted my telescopic sights on to a rook rifle and we shot rooks with it. I missed the first one or two, but shot one soon, and through the telescopic sights I saw it fall. I varied for a few more shots, but I discovered presently that if I waited to see if the rook was falling, through the telescopic sight, I always got the rook. I found one was apt to take one's eye off and one moved whilst firing; looking to see if the bird would fall held everything steady and made shooting easy.

This looking through the sights to see if the bird is hit is really the same as the Army instruction: "Look along your sight after the shot and declare your aim." It is also the same thing as keeping one's eye on the ball at golf. It is also the same as in rowing: "Sit back at the finish of the stroke till the cows come home," and also the same as: "Square the blade and poise when forward." In other words, take time, as taking time is the art of timing.

I practised rifle shooting in the War and made up my mind to try to get the coveted distinction of best shot in the battalion. My company was firing one day and I was going to shoot for this prize myself. After the company had finished, I went to shoot. It was late and my rifle was not at hand, so I borrowed a rifle. The first shot was a bull, the second shot was a bull, and the third ditto. The rifle went off by itself at the fourth shot, and so scored a miss.

"It often does that," said the owner of the rifle. Whereupon I swore at him lustily and stopped shooting, as my chauffeur had just put up a very hot score and the miss destroyed my chance of beating him.

At the next parade I examined rifles and found one very dirty. On reprimanding the volunteer, he said that I had used it last, and hinted that my language had burnt the barrels.

Flock pigeons used to come in to the dam to drink in dry seasons in Queensland. They came in flocks of twenty or thirty. One could see them coming in for a couple of miles. A flock would always come in from one side of the dam, drink, and fly back. The next flock would come from the other side from a similar distance, and so on, always from the opposite side and always arriving a few minutes after the other flock. They all drank at the same spot. I would go down and creep up in the undergrowth near the spot, fire, and get several pigeons, pick them up and hide after a shot. The next lot would always come in half a mile or so lower down and fly away, and the next lot appearing from the opposite side would come to this new place, and all the other flocks would come to the new place and drink. How they knew I had shot and how they knew the exact new spot was incomprehensible. When one lot was drinking the next lot would be four miles away and out of sight.

I have shot in a few pigeon matches. The first, I remember, was at Rockhampton. In Australia one backs oneself to kill with the first barrel. This makes a lot of difference to the betting odds. I did not back myself at first and we all shot very badly, missing bird

after bird. The bookies kept lengthening the odds, and at last I backed myself. I took four to one against and down came the bird, and I backed myself back to even money, killing every bird.

On two or three occasions when passing through Rockhampton I did exactly the same thing. The bookies chaffed me and said I was a “stiff ‘un” till I betted.

What really happened was that I did not tighten the gun on my shoulder till I betted, and though I was honestly trying, the excitement of the bet just woke me up.

There was a rumour that a certain chemist who supplied the cartridges used to give good cartridges if one did not bet and bad if one did. It came out in court afterwards that this was his custom.

One Sunday he got several of us to go and shoot, and as we said we had no cartridges, he offered to bring them. As he prepared to load my gun he said each time, “Are you going to back yourself?” and on my saying no, he loaded.

I killed several birds and then said I was going to back myself. He loaded. I took a few bets and fired. The cartridge was very different and I knew I had been “had”. But the bird after a few flaps fell dead. This I have seen happen on several occasions.

The traps were closed iron things that must have been insufferably hot in the blazing sun, and if a bird was left in for some time it would be nearly killed and the flying would end it.

The loader and the bookies knew I had not shot the bird and thought I was lucky.

At the next shot I said I would not bet. He loaded, and after shooting I took out the other cartridge and pocketed it and did this three or four times. Then I said I would bet, and as I walked up to the mark I opened the gun and changed the cartridge. The bookies could not see this. I bet and called “Pull!” and down came the bird. I turned round and saw the loader gaping and the bookies looking at him, thinking he had let them down. I had another bet and won again.

The next time I called “Pull!” the official was pulling the string but the trap did not open. I called again and looked round, and then he pulled, the trap opened, and the bird flew away. One of the bookies had his foot on the strings and only took them off as I turned round. The referee barred the bird, gave me another shot, and I took their money again and went home.

The bookies had many tricks. Once as I called “Pull!” after having backed myself, one of the bookies called, “Look out – snake!” I jumped round and the pigeon got away and I lost my bet.

CHAPTER VIII

HORSE-RACING AND OTHER SPORT

Australians are very keen on horseracing. It has been said of Melbourne that if it isn't a public holiday there is sure to be a horse-race meeting. In the bush we used to have country meetings with grass-fed horses, which made the sport so cheap that it was open to all.

The horses were given into the hands of the secretary of the race club, who put them all into one paddock for three weeks, after which he gave them to the owners to train them for a week before the races, so no expense was incurred. Of course, I studied how to paddock the horses so that they would come out in the best condition possible.

The work given one's horses varied according to the state of the grass in the paddock. If the grass was green, and it was a good season, the horses were worked hard and sent in poor, and if the season was dry, one sent them in fat, having given them plenty of long, slow work. My old trainer and I made quite a fine art of the study as to how to work the horses so that they should leave the paddock fit. In fact, many people said, "Your horses always come out of the paddock looking like trained horses."

We had either a one-day meeting or a two-day meeting, and generally an off day after that.

On one occasion on the third day, my horses had top weights in both races. There were only two races, one of six furlongs and the other of a mile and a quarter. A cricket match was taking place that day, so I said to the bookmakers:

"I'm not going up to the races, I'm playing cricket, but I'll give your books a good start. I'll lay you £100 level my two horses win the double, and you can run the long-distance horse over the sprint and the sprinter over the long distance."

They accepted the bet and I won the £100. Though my horses were always heavily handicapped, they worked on and improved during the races, and the others fell off.

I had one thing up my sleeve. We could feed our horses on any grass of the country, so I had gathered bags of carrot grass full of seed. When dried this was nearly as good as corn, and proved much better fodder than the other horses got. The others could have done the same, but it never struck them.

On arriving at a race meeting once, I met two of my friends late on the evening before the races. They asked me if I had a jockey who could ride a certain weight, as they had a horse they fancied for a race. I told them I had a jockey of that weight, but he was disqualified, but that we could telegraph to the Queensland Jockey Club and try in get his disqualification removed as his time was nearly up. This boy had come up with the

shearers for shed work, and I kept him on training horses. But the boy did not wish the wire sent, and so he did not ride.

The meeting progressed. I had really come to win the hack [a horse used for pleasure riding. – P.M.] race with a horse with which I had won the heavyweight hack prize at the show. He was the finest piece of horseflesh I ever saw, and won the hack race, my friends being second with their hack. They entered a protest against my horse for having a disqualified jockey, and I was called before the Stewards, who asked me if it was a fact that I had a disqualified jockey. I admitted it, and they said they must disqualify my horse. I asked them why, and they replied it was against the rules to allow a disqualified jockey to ride. But I told them he was not riding; it was another jockey that rode the winning horse, and I looked at my friends and smiled.

Having told them that I had a disqualified jockey, I think they ought to have warned me that they would protest if I won, if they thought he was riding. It struck me as dirty work, allowing me to back my horse and so make a market for theirs, meaning to get mine disqualified if he won. It seemed pretty near robbery. Knowing mine was the only horse likely to beat theirs, they backed their horse very heavily, and so, unwittingly, they put their money into my pocket.

Horse-racing is often described as the sport of kings, but it is also the livelihood of the worst class of rogues one can meet anywhere. Taken as a class, I find the bookmaker a good sportsman, but there are a lot of rogues outside the bookmaker, who live on the game.

I kept the disqualified jockey on training, and as his disqualification expired, he was able to ride at the next meeting at Longreach. It coincided with a Pastoralists' meeting, and there was a gathering of very prominent racing men. I entered this horse, which had only won a hack race, for the five furlongs handicap. The boy trained the horse and fell in love with him. There was a wonderful lot of talent in this race, as amongst the Pastoralists at the meeting were some of our big racing men. One horse held the record for five furlongs for Queensland, and there were three or four other fliers. I got a friend of mine to back my horse, telling him to put £100 on for me. But he was loath to do so, and only put £50 on, and he told me that the boy had weighed out twelve pounds over-weight. No doubt during the six weeks he had been with me he had lived much better than usual.

My jockey took outside station in a big field. My friend had put on the other £50. The flag fell, and my horse got away with a big lead and won easily beating the best field ever seen at Longreach, and many good horses came from there.

One hack I bought out of a selling hack race was a curious-looking brute. He was a blue roan, and when he galloped, his head went straight up into the air and his tail curled over his back like a pig's tail, and he looked a funny sight. I bought after he had won a selling hack race. I asked a friend of mine to bid for him, and we had a laugh that cost me about £10.

At these meetings where all the districts met about once every three months, we generally had an amusing if somewhat alcoholic time. My friend started bidding and soon the opposition faded away. Horseflesh was very cheap and the bids were going up in £1 advances.

The bidding began. My friend £5 – opposition £6; my friend, £7 – £8; my friend, £9 – £10; my friend £11 – opposition silent. Auctioneer saw an imaginary person behind my friend, who bid £12 – that is a way auctioneers have. My friend excitedly bid £13. We laughed, at a cost of £2 to me. Imaginary person, £14; my friend, more excitedly, £15. More laughing. Imaginary person, £16. My friend excited and about to bid again – I called out: “No, you don’t. We’ll have him at £15.”

The owner of that horse was a publican in a bush town, and I was told afterwards that he never forgave me for buying his horse. It was called Bluey, partly on account of its colour but more because when, with travelling stock, it used to carry the blankets, called bluey from their colour.

In the bush it was a favourite game to get an ugly-looking fast horse and rub him with mud. You would then get into the usual conversation with anyone you met on the road about horseracing, produce another horse beautifully groomed, crack him up, and challenge to race the stranger, who would decline. Then you would produce Bluey or his like, hair rubbed the wrong way and plenty of mud on him, and ask what weight would the stranger allow him over a mile. A match was soon made and probably won. Nearly all bushmen fancied (and with good reason) their judgment of a horse, and would bet against the ugly appearance of the Bluey crowd.

Poor old Bluey! I won a few races with him. On the last occasion I raced him the horses had to go through some heavy bog under water. To my horror, Bluey’s jockey was thrown and killed. He was an Irish lad. I started a fund to help his people, and they had a regular Irish wake. They borrowed Bluey and reversed his stirrups and led him round the town with the coffin stopping at every public house for a drink. It was a disgusting sight to me, intensely horrible. Of course the funeral party got merrier as the time wore on, until one expected to hear the old song, “For he’s a jolly good fellow.”

I had not been long on the station when I made up my mind to go to the Isisford Races about eighty miles away. I started off with a unicorn team in the buggy (two in the wheel and one in the lead) at four a.m. by moonlight. It looked light but my overseer, Anderson, warned me that it was deceptive, and sure enough, I had not gone two miles before I ran into a stump and smashed the buggy and had to return home and get another one. I got along all right till I got to the neighbouring station’s woolshed paddock, about fifty miles from my homestead. This neighbouring station, Wellshot, was one of the largest in the district, being over 1,000 square miles.

When I came to the gate into the Wellshot woolshed paddock, I got out to open it, as I had opened the other gates, then drove the horses through on foot behind the buggy,

pulled them up, tied the whip on to the reins, and left it lying towards the gate. As I shut the gate, the horses started to trot away, the whip being ten yards away from me. Had I known what was going to happen, I would have sprinted and got the reins, but I ran quietly, expecting to catch the whip in twenty yards and pull them up.

But when I was a yard away, in one stride they went from a trot to a gallop, and left me. Then occurred a lovely sight. The leader smashed the swingle bar and got clear. One horse pulled the other round and they circled towards me in amongst the timber. They dashed on at a mad gallop, the smashed swingle bar flying and hitting them in the face.

The gallop didn't last long. The horses dashed one on each side of a tree, the pole struck the tree, a dead tree-trunk, fully thirty feet high. It was pretty rotten and the impact smashed it, and smashed the pole and broke all the traces and pole straps, and away went the horses.

It was a great sight seeing the tree smashed and sent flying. There was I, thirty miles from anywhere, with no horses and a buggy without a pole. I had my luggage with me, which included a racing pad, which was nothing but a circingle [a strap that fastens around a horse's girth. Also spelled *surcingle*. – P.M.] and a pair of stirrups.

But how to find a horse? They had galloped off and might be anywhere. I started on their tracks and came on the leader after about a mile's search, with his reins caught in a tree. I brought him back and then I tied my valise on and mounted my circingle and rode on.

I camped at Portland Downs head station that night and rode in on my circingle next day. I telegraphed to my manager:

"Send dray to Wellshot woolshed paddock for buggy with broken pole, some harness in wool-shed, and two horses with harness somewhere in paddock."

Most of the harness was gathered up, and with a tree cut for a new pole, the buggy was brought home, and no great damage was done. The horse on which I finished the journey used to shed his coat out of season and always looked dull. Anderson said it was because he had once been bitten by a snake.

At that meeting I rode in a race for the grass-fed horses and finished second in a big field. I knew the winner was fed on corn, as my trainer told me the saddle-bags of the horse were full of corn. He had met the horse coming in to the meeting and there was no grass belly on the horse at all. I could have got the winner disqualified, but what was the use?

My horse had been fed on corn for months before I got to Queensland and it could have been disqualified by the third horse protesting, but no doubt that horse had been fed on corn too. I had taken over the station from the manager, who was going to England for a spell, and he had been getting this horse ready for this grass-fed race by feeding it on

oats, and he asked me to continue its preparation and take it to the race there, as he had a wager it could beat another man's horse.

"But," I said, "it isn't grass fed."

"Oh," he said, "they all corn-feed them."

Possibly, at first, when the grass-fed race for station hacks was introduced, they were really fed on grass and corn-feeding gradually sneaked in.

I took this horse into Aramac to ride a race for the wager which the manager had made. I sent the horse on ahead and rode in on the morning of the race. I was met by the owner of the horse we were to race, who showed me a piece of horse dung wrapped up. The horse dung contained some oats, and he told me my horse had been eating oats.

I ought to have said, "Donald told me you all fed your horses and he told me to go on feeding his when he left," but I did not give him away.

"Oh," I replied, "perhaps they had to feed the horse on the journey in."

There I showed real ignorance, for they told me that it took more days than the horse had been travelling for the oats to pass through. On that they could have called the match off, and then I should have told them that I was only carrying out Donald's instructions. However, they went on with the match. I suppose they thought I was a mug, and no doubt their horse was corn fed.

We started by mutual consent, and after half a dozen tries we got away. I got much the best of the start. As we were nearing the post I was behind, and my opponent pulled his horse back, and I dashed up. He was a neck ahead as I yelled, "Go!" but my horse was in its stride, and his was not, and before he got going I was two lengths ahead and going away.

After going a quarter of a mile, he called out:

"Where are you going? The track is to your right."

I had a good hold on my horse and was not bothering where I was going.

I won by half a length. They congratulated me, and I pointed out how my horse was heaving and the other was not, and I offered to race a mile. Probably my horse wasn't a stayer.

"Look how it is heaving. You'd beat it at a mile."

But they weren't taking any, and one kindly old gentleman told me that my horse wasn't heaving from distress, but many of the best stayers had the same breathing action as this horse after a gallop.

I thought it was a good stayer too. I am afraid I was trying to deceive them and get more money out of them. I was getting that nasty racing spirit. I knew the horse was a good stayer, because all who knew him told me he was. I had tried it over the half-mile and the mile, and it performed better at the latter distance. So you see what a demoralizing effect horse racing has. Even I succumbed to its influence.

I was asked to judge horses at a show with another judge. This was a compliment. The other man was an expert; he was a bushman, an ordinary station hand but the crack buckjumper [a horse that bucks habitually. – P.M.] rider, and I said to him:

"Shall we want to do any measuring of the horses?"

"No," he replied, "it's all the same if I look at a horse for a minute or a year."

Soon we came to the blood-mares [mares of a blooded breed. – P.M.] class, and the mares were walking round the ring. After one round, my colleague said:

"Tell them to turn out the chestnut mare."

I said to the secretary, "Turn out the chestnut mare."

"What!" exclaimed the secretary. "Turn out Roxanna!" with many notes of exclamation in his voice.

"If Roxanna is her name, turn her out," I replied.

I then told my colleague that it was Roxanna, and he was apparently perturbed. So I asked the secretary:

"What has Roxanna done?"

She had won every prize for blood-mares for years at all the shows within a radius of a hundred miles.

I told the other judge that we had better give Roxanna first prize, and say we turned her out temporarily as her perfection spoilt the look of the others.

After reducing the other competitors to one, we gave it second prize and Roxanna first prize. It began to dawn on me that there was something in the saying of my colleague that it didn't matter whether he looked at a horse for a minute or a year.

The judging went on, and in another blood class I said:

“We’ll turn out that cobby-looking bay.”

"What!” screamed my learned colleague, "that belongs to Tuck!” Poor old Tuck was a very popular man.

“I don’t care who it belongs to; turn it out,” I replied, and out it went.

A little later I had an amusing experience with Tuck and the secretary. Tuck and I were judging the buggy ponies, and as we judged Tuck called out:

“Here’s a lark; look at that buggy and pair of ponies!”

They were outside the enclosure, and we could only dimly see a pair of ponies bolting with a buggy, crashing through the crowd.

Tuck was climbing up a fence to look at the fun, but I tempered his joy by saying:

“It’s your buggy and my ponies, Tuck.”

I had brought in a pair of ponies, and as there had been heavy rains, I had ridden in and borrowed a buggy from Tuck. Stupidly they had yoked up the ponies, not knowing them, and this was the result.

No great damage had been done, and we secured them and drove them round the ring. But their blood had been roused, and they took us round the ring at their pace. The pole snapped, and I hauled at the reins, and the pole, getting between their legs, threw them, and the brake stopped the buggy.

The ponies were in a tangle in a heap, and I said to the secretary:

“Just you get out and sit on their heads, Ted.”

Ted refused, and I told him to hold the reins. This was really the worst position. I got out and sat on their heads, and told him to get down and undo the traces, then the pole straps, and pull pole and buggy out of the way. Then the ponies got up.

But Tuck didn’t give me first prize. I told him to get the buggy done up at my expense, and when I got the bill for £70 I felt he had made a good job of it, as he could have bought a new one for less.

Harking back to the judge who was a crack buckjump rider, he rode entirely by balance, and told me that the whole secret of it was studying where the horse intended to go and trying to get there first, a thing one can possibly do if one has plenty of practise and a fine natural capacity for riding buckjumpers. Nearly all buckjump riders used a monkey strap, that is, a strap fixed to the pommel of the saddle to hang on by.

At a race meeting there was a protest, and I, as President of the Club, had to take the chair. One of the jockeys – all gentlemen riders – had protested against another horse for interfering with him badly. His evidence was that he had been race riding for over forty years and that this was the first protest he had ever made. It was not only the worst interference he had ever been subjected to, but also it was very deliberate. I asked him to read his depositions over and sign them. He could not read without his glasses. I read them to him; he had difficulty in hearing.

Here was a horse badly bumped running second, ridden by an old, infirm man who must be worse than a young one. After the protest I asked him if he were racing this horse to-morrow, and he said he would never race again. I offered to buy his horse and he sold him.

I went to the handicapper, and told him I had bought the horse and said, “Give him a fair handicap,” as the practise was to load any horse belonging to me. He said he had given the handicapping to the bookmakers. They were really the best handicappers, as they always wanted a good race to stimulate the betting. The last race of the second day was the race that was to be handicapped; it was also always the best betting race of the meeting. I knew the bookies would load my horse as I always backed my entry, and they did. They raised him twenty-one pounds, which, of course, was ridiculous. My rider and I talked it over, and we agreed we had no chance, and we knew there was one horse, called Roy, who had not been let go at the meeting. So we agreed to back Roy and I was to do the betting.

Roy’s owner was riding him, and he asked me to back his mount for him. There were five bookies with £10 books. They offered me 3 to 1, so I took them 30 to 10 each or £150 to £50. Roy did his preliminary, and I told his owner what I had done. The bookies asked me to bet, so I bet them £150 to £50 I would name the winner, jumping from 3 to 1 against to 3 to 1 on. They each took £30 to £10 and then they said, “What name?” expecting that I would back my own. I said:

“Write down Roy, and don’t over-weight my horse in future.”

The horses were lined up to start, so the dear, honest bookies could do nothing, but it was quite likely some one had a mission to stop Roy. So my horse got on one side of Roy and the half-owner of Roy on the other side to shield him. These three riders had ridden in every race that day, and at the start the owner and rider of Roy said:

“Let the winner stand the three champagne.”

The three got away in the lead and held it. The others had to go wide to get up, and none could do so. As they entered the straight, Roy leading half a length, three whips rose in the air and all struck Roy, and two voices called out, “Go in for the champagne,” and Roy sprang away and won easily.

Once I bought a horse from a friend of mine who was very keen on racing. This horse had shown wonderful speed in trials over short courses and was very well-bred; he would take a big lead in a race but always died away after three furlongs.

After one meeting, when this horse had been heavily backed, I said to my friend:

“I’ll buy that horse off you.”

“What will you give for him?” he said.

“Nothing till he wins, and then I’ll give you £50, a good price for a beaten horse.”

“Right you are, but by God he’ll ruin you!”

I had my own idea about that. I fancied the horse wasn’t well and also that he raced without breathing and then burst, and these two points I hoped to put right. Trainers have told me that horses will race like this, gallop without breathing, and consequently they soon die away. I gave the horse to my boundary rider who trained for me, and told him to find out what was the matter with him. His first report was that the horse had worms badly and he was giving him soft food and oil to get rid of them. I brought him into the head station to train some horses and take them to a race meeting. This horse was still suffering from worms. The horse used to exercise with the others on the track, but only did slow work.

One day I said, “Let him run a mile.”

He galloped the mile and pulled up as fit as a fiddle. His wind was very clean, his breathing quiet; in fact, as the expression goes, he would not blow a candle out. Here was a horse eating bran mashes and soft stuff that should have made him fat and puff and blow, if galloped fast, and it was not having any such effect. I could only argue that the horse was too poor inside, and the fattening food was building him up and giving him the necessary amount of fat.

The horse was sent in to race with the others.

I had another trainer who came rushing round to me, saying:

“That lunatic trainer of yours is feeding one of your horses on a bran mash and the bookies are watching him.”

“Dear, dear!” I said, in a tone of voice that meant such conduct was very reprehensible.

Showing the bookies the horse eating a huge bran mash and then the next day backing him to win would be a liberal education for them, especially if the horse won. They would then be careful not to overlay their books in future. There are some wicked people about who if they had similar information would use it to take the poor book-

makers' money. Oh yes, there are! One meets people of this type on a racecourse – quite simple-looking people who nevertheless are very deceitful. So, by showing the bookies a horse could sometimes race well after eating bran mashes, I was teaching them a very useful lesson. What if the bookies, when they laid me the odds next day, felt sorry for me and thought: "Poor chap, he does not know his horse is stuffed full of bran." Yes, what? And what if the horse won?

The race came. I put up my jockey, Billy Smith, who afterwards became the crack light jockey of Australia. He listened to the betting and pulled a long face when he heard the odds were very long, as my horses were nearly always favourites. I got the previous owner to do the betting for me. I thought the bookies would remember they had won his money before, and would be pleased to give him a chance to get it back. I had run the horse at weight for age over a long distance the day before, with an indifferent jockey boy up, and now he was going out with the crack jockey and very much less weight. The race was a handicap; the race the day before had proved he was fit, and I had broken him of his bolting habit.

To cure the horse of bolting at the start I instructed the boy to pull him out of the lead at any cost in the first race, and after they started, the boy fairly laid his head on the horse's rump and pulled. After a furlong he stopped the bolt, the horse broke to a trot and dropped back last and then galloped steadily. I had told the boy to finish fourth if he could. If he could get up fourth in that class, the handicap ought to be a certainty.

A mare called My Love fell at the turn. The boy finished fourth and called me up and said:

"I could not have helped winning if My Love had not fallen and interfered with my horse."

I did not tell the bookies this because they did not ask me, and I didn't tell them the horse was accustomed to bran mashes; perhaps they thought the one they saw him eat was the only one and they were taking advantage of their knowledge. That does not seem a very nice frame of mind.

It looked very like it, because the previous owner came back and said:

"The more I back the horse, the longer price he goes to." I had told him to back him down to evens.

He said, "I started him at sixes and now he has gone to eights."

"Well," I said, "send him to tens."

I told Billy Smith to take a strong hold and steady the horse for the first furlong. Well, the horse took the lead and won very easily. Billy's face was a treat to look at; before the race he looked very glum, my horse, usually favourite, being at a long price, but when he came back after winning, he was grinning all over, his face before and after the race

would have made two good photos – the first, “I have not taken Kruschen Salts [a popular laxative. – P.M.],” and “I have taken Kruschen Salts.”

I don’t think the ring made money that meeting, but they got some fine knowledge as to what horses could do with bran mashes inside them. That horse won fourteen races in succession after that, and I sold him to go to India. I never heard what he did there.

A description of a day’s grass-fed racing might be amusing. A friend of mine asked me if he could leave his race-horses with me as he was going away for a trip for a couple of months. I told him I would take care of them and run them at the next grass-fed meeting, and asked him what he wished me to do with them.

"Do anything you like so long as you don’t win a race with Count,” he replied.

Count had just run in the biggest grass-fed race of all our meetings and finished first, but was disqualified for crossing at the finish. So Count remained a maiden, and he wanted to win a Maiden Plate with him later.

One of the bushmen won a Maiden Race with a mare and she had a foal six months after. He sent the prize money back with an apology, saying he really thought she was a maiden when he entered her.

I sent his horses into the paddock and received them a week before the races. I worked them all but Count, and I let him run loose and get fat.

The owner came up the day before the races, and at six o’clock in the morning we started off for the race-course. I drove a four-in-hand chestnut team, and on arriving at the course undid the wheelers’ traces and the pole straps and drove the horses off on foot. The leaders’ traces were hitched on to the wheelers’ direct. I tied the reins to a tree and the horses stayed there till evening. It is a sight to see how patiently horses stand tied up all day in the bush. They are accustomed to it.

On the way I told my friend his horses were ready to race, all except Count. I advised him to scratch Count. I said, “Although he has had no work he might win, and then he would not be eligible for a good Maiden Plate.”

For some reason he seemed anxious to give him a run, and he did. I called up the trainer, Jim, and asked him how the horses were, and he said they were all fit, except Count, who had had no work and had just had a big drink of water. In fact, he said:

“He drank his fill. I could not get any more water into him unless I pumped it in with the centrifugal pump.”

Not only did my friend start the horse, but he got the crack rider to ride him. He came to me saying his rider had backed Count to win £10, and was buying the sharpest pair of spurs he could get. He was a fool to run him and an awful fool to put this man up,

because he had a habit of locking his knee in front of the other jockey's knee and getting pushed home.

The race was run, and this is just what happened. Count's rider locked his knee in front of the other horse's rider's knee and got carried home, winning by a short head. The second horse was named Protest, and there should have been a protest, arid Count should have been disqualified. I congratulated my friend on his win, and smilingly told him he had won his Maiden Plate.

At this moment the Clerk of the Scales came up and said Count's rider could not draw the weight, and asked what was he to do? It was a very near thing. I told him he must disqualify him, but he said he did not like to do that. Would the Committee see him weighed and act?

So, being President, I called the Committee – told them the rule was the bar must be drawn up for the jockey to be weight and the bar was not drawn up. Would one of them propose a motion? To my amazement one proposed and another seconded and it was carried unanimously that Count was weight. I have no doubt it was through their sense of friendliness to my friend and me that they voted for Count's jockey being weight; and, of course, it was just what the owner did not want. Count was making history. Disqualified in his first race, he ought to have been disqualified in his second race for boring and also for not being weight, and yet he won against his owner's wishes.

The next race was coming on and I told my friend to run his big chestnut horse in this. The chestnut was an old horse. The way to train an old horse with only a week to work in was to give him plenty of steady work but no fast galloping, as one fast gallop very often made an old horse stiff and sore for a week or two, but a gallop in the morning of the race meeting would wind him up for the afternoon.

I had a trainer whom I discharged and who was very angry with me. The other station hands did not like him. They asked me to give them a trial with one of my horses against their horse and keep this trainer away. I did this and the trainer got angry and insolent, so I discharged him. It came to my ears that he was going to run my steeplechaser off in his race.

"Well," I said to my friend, "your horse wants a steady run this morning to wind him up for the afternoon. Now if you put my ex-trainer up he will pull him for spite, and that is just the run he wants. He can't win this morning, but an easy gallop will put him right."

Away went my friend and got the ex-trainer to ride. Soon he came back to me and said that he had told the ex-trainer I had backed the horse – "And that will ensure his not being overgalloped," he concluded.

Well, the ex-trainer came to the finish a bad last, and he had the bad manners to poke his tongue out at me. Of course, I was looking very crestfallen.

The next race was the steeplechase, and I made the mistake of backing my horse. The ex-trainer was riding in the race and I knew he intended to ride my horse off at a jump, and he did. He deliberately rode into him and drove him off a fence, and so I lost the race. It never struck me till later that I ought to have backed my other fancy and I should have won.

The Stewards were called together and my ex-trainer was warned off all race-courses for life. In the evening when the country people had gone away, the Committee was called together again and the warning-off rescinded. Later on the full Committee disqualified him for life once more. Some of the townsfolk were curious people in those days. The only reason why a good many people were in the bush in Queensland was their desire to get away from the police.

The racing went on. In one race my horse was so badly interfered with that my rider got angry, flogged the other jockey, and came to the Committee to report him for foul riding and very bad interference. The blood from the flogging he had given the other man was all over his riding breeches. My horse had been heavily backed by the public and the bookies had sent the man out to stop him.

I ran that horse again in a later race and he won very easily, but the bookies had taken the public's money and they did not back him. The last race came, and the big chestnut that had been ridden by the ex-trainer was backed by my friend and myself, and he won easily.

During the day we had several drinks, but were not any the worse. We pulled up at the shearers' pub for a last drink before driving home, and we all agreed that that drink was doctored, because it had an extraordinary inebriating effect on four out of the five of us. The fifth, my overseer Anderson, didn't drink. I arrived home without my hat and whip, driving a four-in-hand team.

In the morning I went to see the horses. Then the jockey who had been ridden off in the steeple chase told me my ex-trainer had stolen two blankets that belonged to the horses.

He gave me a square bit of blanket that had been cut out of one. I saw the police, and they arrested the ex-trainer asleep under the trees against a waterhole in the bush. He was sleeping in the blankets, and the piece fitted exactly. If he had not fouled my horse, I should not have heard anything about it.

I drove to the trial with the rider of my steeplechaser to identify my blanket. The ex-trainer was there. His solicitor was a strong Labour M.P., and had been Attorney-General in a very short Labour Government. They were in power only six hours. The police proved the blanket was my property and that it was stolen. Never a word in favour of the ex-trainer. To our astonishment, the P.M. gave judgment in his favour and let him off. A shocking miscarriage of justice. This was rife at the time. I went straight

round and asked for a copy of the depositions, and found the police demanding them also.

In the meantime the ex-trainer was out and away. The humour of the case was that on driving home my witness told me the ex-trainer was actually wearing in court his (my witness's) coat that he had also stolen. I thought that was bad enough, but I was told later that there was reason to suppose that the ex-trainer was the man who had cut a lot of draught-horses' throats in the big strike, and that he had been had up for abducting a young girl, and that on appeal he had got two J.P.'s disrated for their verdict against him. That was the last I heard of him.

Once when I went to Melbourne from the country, a trainer said to me:

"Let me have £50 and you can have a steeplechaser, O.K. by name."

I gave him the £50 and owned the horse.

In those days we often ran the horses in the trainer's name, and O.K. was left in the trainer's name. I asked a brother of mine to come to the races the next day and told him I had O.K. running in the steeplechase. We got to the course just as the horses were going to start for the steeplechase. The trainer came up and said O.K. had no chance; this was to stop me backing a "stiff 'un". I did not like his running my horse stiff and I told him so, and said it must not happen again.

"All right," he replied, and then advised me to back one, and I took a good wager, getting back my £50 and a good deal more. O.K. ran the wrong course and was had up by the Stewards.

My brother said to me, "Are you worrying about owning O.K.?"

I said I was.

"Well," he said, "don't worry any more. I thought I owned him till Norman told me he did."

Just fancy that! Three of us had given the trainer money and thought we owned the horse, and goodness knows how many more had done the same!

He dared not win as so many people would want the stakes. I can see O.K. winning and half the course coming to lead him in. I asked the trainer what happened with the Stewards, and he said:

"We told them they ought to give us a map of the course."

I remember O.K. once starting in a field of two, and I backed the other, who won easily. I asked the trainer afterwards what would have happened if the other horse had fallen.

“Oh,” he said, “O.K.’s rider had orders to fall off at once!”

The worst thing I ever heard of on a race-course was when a horse owner came to me and asked me to put £1,000 on his horse. I said I would if he would give me enough information. He said that it was a certainty, but he could give me no information, so I refused to bet.

My trainer then came and explained the position. The horse raced two stone under weight, and when they came to weigh in, the owner was under the floor of the weighing room. A board was out of the floor, and he hung a two-stone weight on the weighing machine when his jockey got on the scales. It was found out afterwards. My trainer told me this man used to get under the floor of the weighing room the night before, and stay there all night and wait till his jockey got on the scales.

I was also told this same man was a steward at a country meeting and had a string tied under the weighing machine which came up through the floor and was fastened on the wall. He used to sit beside the string and pull it to make his jockey weight. This explained to me how a friend of mine weighed out all right, won a race, and then weighed in twelve pounds overweight and was disqualified. No doubt the man with the string had backed the second horse and got the first horse disqualified by pulling the string and making the jockey overweight.

I think I’ve said enough to show that horse-racing, the Sport of Kings, is a game on which you had better not bet.

I took up all sports very keenly. There are two occasions I remember into which I put the greatest keenness. The first occasion was when I entered for the school swimming underwater, or, as it was called, “Diving for Distance”.

The secretary said, “I bet you half a crown I beat you.”

I had not had any intention of performing.

It was the custom for the boys to enter for as many races as they could afford, to swell the prize money. I was fully four years younger than the secretary, and though very tall for my age, I was only a baby. However, I thought I would have to go in as he had bet me. I was obsessed with the idea that I should make a fool of myself, so I practised assiduously.

We used to go to swim in the sea every morning, so I ran to the bath every morning about a mile, swam underwater as far and as fast as I could, and then had a fast breast stroke to improve my pace. During the day I frequently practised holding my breath as long as possible.

The day came, and the secretary performed, and to my joy he didn’t go far, and I felt I could beat him when my turn came. I hung on as long as I could, and not only did I beat

him, but I won the first prize. He had done twenty-three yards and I did forty-five yards. I think he only went in to get my half-crown. He was quite nice about it when he handed me the first prize and his money. I won this event every year afterwards, and also the Diving for Objects and the Breast Stroke. Again this shows the value of practise.

One year, in Diving for Objects, the water was very clear and several boys got five out of the six objects. They were china eggs. It was practically impossible to hold more than five in the two hands. When I came up I also had five eggs in my hands. I was very exhausted, and swam slowly to the umpire, gave him the five eggs and opened my mouth and pulled out a sixth. A loud mar of laughter greeted this.

One year in the School Breast Stroke race I beat a boy who soon after won the Breast Stroke Race in the Town Swimming Sports, beating, amongst others, a competitor who had won the Amateur Championship Breast Stroke, and there were a lot of good swimmers in Victoria. So my victory was another illustration of the result of assiduous practise.

I didn't swim for six years after I left school, but during my last year in England, whilst at Cambridge, I entered a swimming race and got a minute start in 100 yards. I won my heat and the final, and I won six races off the reel. In my seventh race I had 25 seconds from the Amateur Champion of England in 200 yards, a big come-down from 60 seconds in 100 yards from a scratch man not champion. I did not win, but the scratch man did not gain more than 10 seconds on me.

Another episode showing the value of practise was when a cousin of mine asked me to cut out the running for him in the 300 yards race under sixteen years of age in the school sports. I was two years younger than he was. He was scratch and I had 12 yards start. Having a boy to cut out the running was all "flash talk" really, but I took my mission seriously and worked very hard during the training. The slower the race was run the better it would have been for the scratch man really. The day came and the race. It is best described in the words of the school paper:

"Fairbairn started with a long, telling stride and won easily."

This was a great surprise and a great educator to me on the value of practise. I had only practised hard to be able to fulfil my mission of pace-maker thoroughly.

Amongst other things, I have done a good deal of dancing, though strangely enough I used to think I would never be able to dance, because I had been told that I had no ear for music. In my extreme youth I used to attend a dancing class once a week, at a girls' school, where my fright of talking to, let alone dancing with, a girl – or is it shame of such a come-down at that age? – was second only to my hatred of the dancing master, who used to hit one with the fiddle-stick whenever he could.

Looking back one can see how far on the track towards ruining the boys' chance of learning to dance that dancing master was. He certainly did not understand the first

principles of teaching, that is to make one keen and to like the thing taught. He instilled fear and hatred only.

One often reads in the papers of people teaching animals tricks by cruelty. This is also quite wrong, and an exposure of ignorance and want of knowledge of stock. It is all done by kindness and by that alone.

So I fought shy of dancing for some time. I was told I had no ear for music originally by a master with the same brutality, and from that I felt sure I was devoid of ear and was frightened to sing as, of course, this fear acted on my singing.

We used to have a class for singing once a week at the school, and all the school attended – over 100 boys. It was the beginning of a new term, and the master put a chalk mark opposite the boy next me and then asked the boys with chalk marks to come down to the front seats to fill vacancies in the choir, as he called it. He said there were still some vacancies and he was coming round again.

So I became very keen to get into the choir. The boy who had gone forward from next to me was singing very loud, so I sang as loudly as I could when the master got near me, and hoped. As he got opposite me he stopped the class and I had visions of being asked to sing a solo. Imagine my joy when he told me to write the song out a hundred times. I never sang again. I was nine years old.

Now what effect has that had on my life? It was a brutal blow – possibly worse than the blow to Melba when she sang to some of her old friends, and one child's criticism was, "Emily, I could see your drawers."

So I determined I had no ear for music and would never be able to dance. It was not long after that I discovered the ear for music and for timing were quite different. When at Cambridge I sometimes went to Brighton for the Xmas vac. and stayed with an undergraduate friend. He was a beautiful dancer, and there were several of them who were, and we used to meet and practise dancing daily, and I found I could dance all right.

One of the girls there had been bullied at her school by the dancing mistress when she was quite a kid, so she knocked the mistress down and bumped up and down on her, she told me, relishing the bumping up and down. She was expelled, and her father gave her half a crown when she told him. How I wished I had bumped up and down on my dancing master!

I soon discovered that dancing was governed by the timing which is practically the basis of all athletics. Possibly there are cases of good dancers who are not good at some games, as, of course, short-sighted dancers would not make good cricketers. But as a rule you will find your best team amongst the best dancers.

At Brighton that little clique went to twenty-six dances on thirteen consecutive days, putting in one afternoon and one evening dance daily. Our best lady dancer went to London and danced with King Edward, and after that she would not reverse as she said it was bad form. We used to practise such things as reversing right round the room alone with a penny on one's head.

These Brighton girls came up to the Cambridge May Week and two of them partnered the late Duke of Clarence, the present King's elder brother, so they were no doubt good dancers.

My friend was a very fine dancer and also a very fine boxer; professionals said he had the best left of any amateur of those days. Strangely enough, he was terribly blind and could not see without his eye-glass. I have known other good boxers very blind. Possibly the explanation is that they develop a sense of quickness in passing people walking et cetera, as they won't see them till right on them. He was also a very fine amateur actor, and used to do a lot of acting in the vacs. He used to take the leading part with a professional lady with Lewis Waller [1860-1915, well known actor in London and the British Empire. – P.M.] and Florence West [1862-1912, Waller's wife and a fellow-actor. – P.M.], then amateurs, in smaller parts. He could have made a fortune acting, but wasn't allowed to go on the stage.

Owing to his short-sightedness and powerful shoulders, he used to present an unusual appearance, head poked forward. We often went out at night in Cambridge, and the "townies" would insult him and he would fight one, much to that one's regret.

One night in London a man insulted him and they took to blows in Waterloo Monument. He had backed the other man to the edge of the steps when the man gave in.

"Go on," said our friend, "I have not hit you yet."

As the other man's face was a mass of blood he did not go on. Our friend wanted to knock him down the steps.

Next day the Amateur Champion boxer turned up on the Stock Exchange with two black eyes, so it was probably the man our friend had not hit.

I danced many hundred and possibly thousand miles. We used to dance very frequently on board ship between England and Australia. Hot nights and fast waltzing produced perspiration. I had an old pair of evening bags I used to put on for dancing. I sweated so much in them that there was a white streak of grease down by the stripes on the legs. It only showed in the morning, as it soon melted at night.

Somewhere about this period my old pal "Hutch" and I had been in training for a long time, having rowed Head of the River in the May races and having trained on for Henley. On the day before the Metropolitan Regatta, therefore, we thought we might allow ourselves a little relaxation, especially as we were starting the following evening

for Hamburg, to take part in the regatta there. So when Hutch said, “What about a little snack at the Café Royal?” I jumped at the idea.

We arrived at the Café Royal for our little snack at 4.30 p.m. In those days the Café Royal could give the best and most expensive meal to be obtained anywhere, and we determined to order a luxurious meal. Choosing one dish at a time, and starting with a bottle of Clos Vougeot at twenty shillings a bottle (and a lovely wine), it took us quite a long time to finish our little snack.

Eventually the repast came to an end at 11 p.m., and we played dominoes to settle who should pay the bill, £5 15*s. od.* (not a bad snack for the eighties!). On starting dominoes I suggested that we should play our usual game of 100 up; but Hutch had recently been to Paris and had learned that the real game was 101 – that is to say, whoever was first put to 101, lost the game. This change was very pleasing to me, because I was put to exactly 100, and in the next hand Hutch was put over the 101 and had to pay. Then we took the bus to Putney.

Next morning we were rowing in Pairs, Fours, and Eights, and had to start early in the Pairs, just after low water. I was very angry on arriving at our stake-boat to find we were nearly on the mud, there being hardly any water under us. The position of the stake-boat was simply disgraceful. It was a very unfair start, because the other two pairs had a good tide under them, and we must lose a lot at the start.

The starter called, “Are you ready?” and I replied, “No.” But without listening to me, he said, “Go.” The other two went, but had to come back because I had called, “No.”

The umpire was very angry. “I had a good mind to go without you!” he exclaimed, to which I replied, “It would not matter. We can catch them any time, even though you have put us on the mud.” This was said right across the other two pairs; it closed the conversation.

We started, and soon led freely. Charlie Hughes, a Thames sculler, was sculling beside us. He wanted to know if I proposed to take my sculling boat to Hamburg, because he would not take his if I did. After some conversation I said, “All right, Charlie, you can take yours.” Charlie was on the side of our boat opposite to the pairs we were racing. I thought the pairs were behind us, and I was surprised to hear Charlie say, “Look out! The race has passed you.” Off we went – and won. And we won the Eights and Fours afterwards. So our “snack” did not hurt us.

I fancy that is the only race where the leaders forgot that they were racing.

Part III

AUSTRALIAN LIFE

CHAPTER IX

LIFE IN THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH

People always say Australians are very hospitable, and it is true. A man will turn up in the bush and stay as long as he pleases.

I remember once going into an undergraduate's rooms at Cambridge where two young Australians were laughing. On inquiring what was the joke, they said they were comparing manners in England and in Australia. One said these men had tea, and on going away thanked us for the tea, whereas, as Jack said, a man once called in for tea at his father's house and stayed eleven years, and did not say thank you when he left.

There is a delightful story told of a child saying his prayers the night before he and his family left for Australia. After a long prayer he wound up with:

"Well, good-bye, God, I am going to Australia to-morrow."

Sometimes the man outstays his welcome and it is hard to get rid of him. My old friend whom I have mentioned as a sheep-seller, and who spoke broken English, had a man who was noted for outstaying his welcome. This man came back from the stockyard the morning after the unwelcome guest had arrived and he said, "Baldy" (he was called Baldy because he was bald), "your horse is in the yard."

"Is it?" said Baldy. "I will let it out."

"Oh no, you won't! It is a pretty good hint for you to go."

He was a neighbour of mine in Australia and an inveterate dealer. He had taken up property when the sheep runs were thrown open to selectors; before that he was a buyer of fat stock for a freezing works. When he bought, he used to say, "I have them sold before I buy." He would come over to spend the afternoon, and he would begin:

"I'll buy a mob of sheep."

I would reply, "I don't want to sell."

Then he would say, "Well, I'll sell you a mob of sheep," and frequently I would sell him 10,000 or buy 10,000, though before he came I had no intention of buying or selling any.

One day he came to me and said:

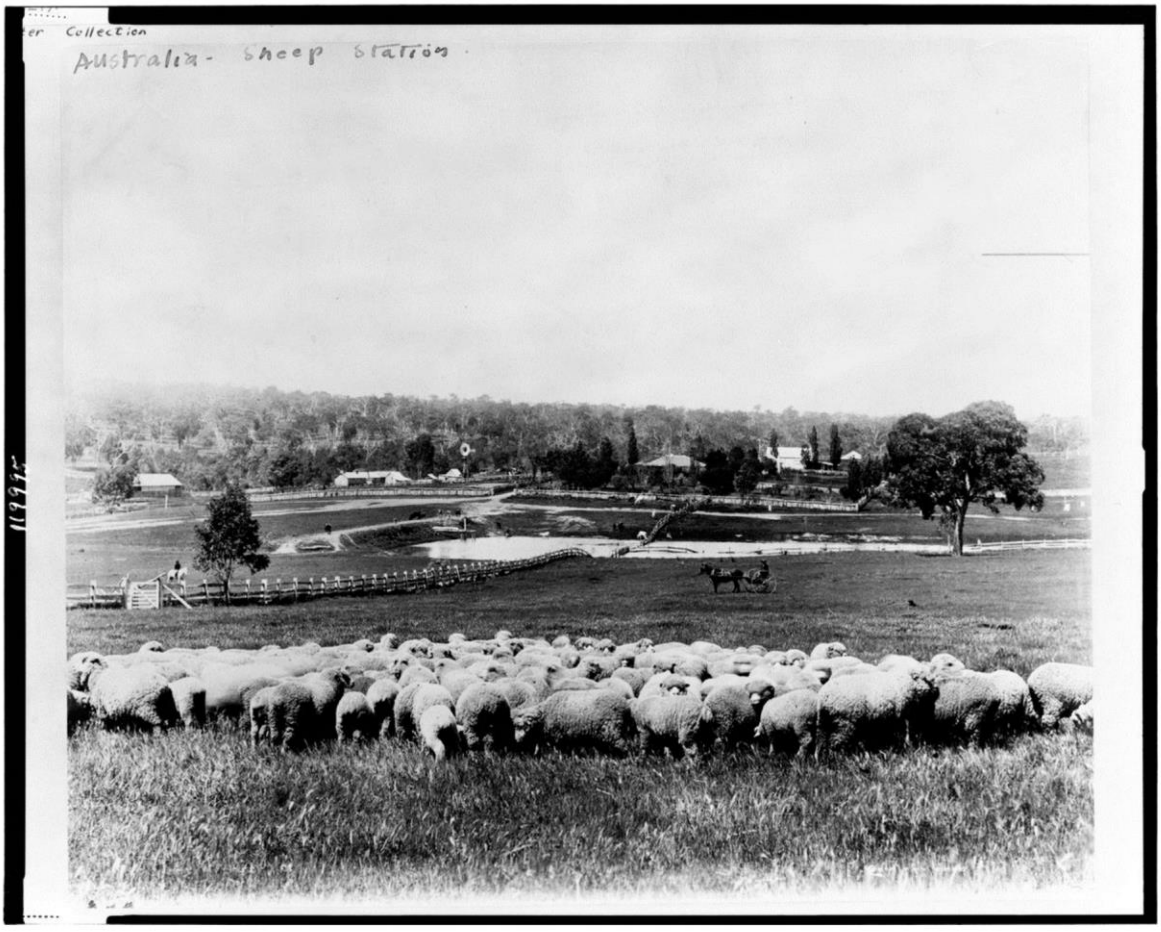
"I can't get any credit and I want to buy."

So I promised to back his bill for 20,000 sheep and got 2½ per cent. commission – a cheque for £130, for writing my name. I had seen his country, which had been visited by a heavy storm, and it was in a beautiful condition.

The next year he asked me to back his bill again. After a lot of bother, I agreed to do so and called up my agent, who had acted for me the previous year, and I told the agent I had agreed to back this man's bill up to 30,000 sheep, and he was to act for me.

That was two a.m. in a ballroom.

He must have started away at once, for in the next two days he had bought 120,000 sheep in four lots of 30,000 each. I suppose my agent I gave him a letter saying I would back him up to 30,000 sheep, and he travelled to the nearest stations, showing my letter to each manager, who sold him 30,000 sheep on it. He had to travel 120 miles, because each station was about 30 miles long.



Sheep station c. 1900

I heard of it very soon after. Of course he had broken his faith and I could have repudiated my promise to back his bill. However, I met him driving along one day, and

after five minutes' conversation, I bought 30,000 old ewes off him at three and ninepence per head. This would clear me of backing his bill, at the worst. Then down came the rain, five inches general fall, creeks all flooded, and his 120,000 sheep were safe, and my 30,000 were good value.

The next thing happened again at a ball after midnight. He came up to me and said:

"That was a fine mob of sheep I sold you at four shillings."

We had nothing in writing, only a five minutes' chat, but I had a witness in the buggy to that chat – not that it ever dawned on me he would be wanted. I called him up and asked him what price those sheep had been sold to me for, and to my amusement he said, "Three and sixpence." He had forgotten. I corrected him to three and ninepence. The seller never said a word; he was glad no doubt that I was honest.

On the following day he asked me to sign bills for the 30,000 sheep I had bought; the bills were six months terms. I signed the bills and asked him about backing his bill for 30,000 sheep.

"Oh," he said, "I paid cash for those 120,000 sheep."

I was surprised.

"Oh yes," he added, "I am stinking of the muck!" (Nice name for cash!) Of course he ought to have paid me commission on 120,000 sheep, but he did not.

A few days afterwards I saw my agent as I passed through his town, and I told him that this man said he had paid cash for 120,000 sheep. He screamed with laughter, and told me that he offered the managers cash if they would give him ten per cent. reduction. The managers wrote to the owners and got a reply that the reduction for cash was too great. Then he offered nine per cent. and eight per cent., well knowing six per cent. was the best he could get. In this way two months went by. He discounted my bill for cash, sold more of his sheep, and eventually paid cash with a six per cent. rebate.

No doubt the morality of these transactions was doubtful, and, needless to say, I backed no more bills for him.

He was a good joker and many stories were in circulation about him. One of these stories showed his presence of mind under difficult circumstances.

He was travelling with a mob of his sheep. Times were troublous and his men threatening, so it struck him that it would be a good idea to establish a reputation as a bruiser. He picked a quarrel with a pasty-faced, mild-looking, six-foot bank clerk who seemed soft and easy game. But he made a mistake; the white face was from indoor work and the man was really very wiry and athletically built.

They had only just begun to fight when the pasty-faced one shot out a long straight left, knocking our noble hero flat on his back. Instantly, from this recumbent position he exclaimed:

"My God, you are a regular Sullivan [John L. Sullivan, 1858-1918, the first World Heavyweight Champion of gloved boxing. – P.M.]! I always heard you were very good; I give you best."

He rose and invited all hands to drink, and explained how his victor was the finest fighter going. So he not only saved himself further punishment, but gained a great reputation for his pluck in tackling such a champion.

He was our greatest character. About this time he got engaged to be married. The marriage day arrived, and before the English ceremony there was a Roman Catholic ceremony, at which I was a witness. The bridegroom was a foreigner by birth, and always spoke rather broken English. He was called Charlie Parsons.

The priest said: "Say after me, I, Charles Bonaventura Augustus Kierski, do take my plighted troth."

The bridegroom: "I . . . do take my —— oath."
The priest repeated the words, and the bridegroom took his —— oath very distinctly and the ceremony went on.

It was the only time I heard his real name.

In 1890 we had the great shearers' strike – the first big strike in the world. Australia has had more strikes per head than any other country. During the War I believe Australia had 2,400 strikes.

My eldest brother George was our chairman in this strike, and he and his two committee men lived in a special train for months, and another brother, Charlie, led the van with the military and the police.

The shearers had refused to shear under the Pastoralists' shearing agreement, and wanted their own terms, which the Pastoralists would not accept. I had the shearers ready to start when the strike began, and there was a big meeting in Barcaldine – the township at the end of the railway – about 400 miles inland in Central Queensland. Both shearers and the Pastoralists had general meetings there, with their executive committees. We met in a corrugated-iron room at nine a.m., and continued until midnight, discussing suggested solutions before we adjourned for drinks, a necessary item, for the sun stood daily at 160°, and the room was stiflingly hot. After a couple of days, the meetings broke up, because no agreement could be come to with the shearers. I got my bill from the publican and objected to the item of seventeen drinks seventeen shillings – saying I was not standing the drinks and would not pay.

Union Camp, Barcaldine, 1891 Shearers' Strike

"Never mind," was the cool reply, "the other sixteen have all paid."

I returned to the sheep-station, and as things were as they were, I arranged to shear the sheep without any agreement. Work went very smoothly, because the shearers saw it would be their last cheque for some time.

The trouble was in getting the wool away. I had to stipulate for the Pastoralists' agreement, and the carriers would not accept this.

National Library of Australia

Sheep shearers, 1880

I had one man with two teams who had agreed to the Pastoralists' rates, and I loaded his wagons. Along came two other carriers, and I loaded them, and they all signed the way-bills.

On the following morning I anticipated there would be trouble, as these carriers would have been told that by signing these way-bills they had agreed to Pastoralists' rates. It was a blazing hot day, and I was standing near the woolshed. Near me were the forty shearers and forty shed hands, collectively termed "roustabouts", and beyond was my overseer giving the musterers instructions as to what sheep to bring in.

I called out to the overseer:

"These swine refuse to carry the wool after having signed the way-bills; what do you think of them?"

"What do I think of them?" he replied. "They look to me like a pair of rotten eggs looking for a sunny spot to try and hatch themselves."

The effect was marvellous. The shearers walked to their stands, the crowd melted away, and in silence the carriers yoked their teams and departed.

I fancy the sunny spot was too much for them, as it was blazing hot.

Australia has always struck me as a country lying fallow for future generations in an intentional scheme of creation. The soil of Central Queensland is wonderfully good, no doubt largely owing to the fact that the land lies fallow in many dry seasons.

In the year 1891 we had a very wet January, and over twenty-five inches of rain fell. I was shearing at the time. The shearers used to get through about 4,000 sheep a day, so every second day we had to bring in the sheep in mobs of 10,000, and leave them in a small field, or paddock, as all fields are called in Australia.

This paddock was exactly 320 acres. In the corner there was a shallow creek, and there could not have been anything like 100 acres of grass the other side of the creek.

Ten thousand sheep were put into this corner when the shearers went on strike. The sheep could have crossed the creek if they had wished, and would have done so if their feed was getting at all short, but they stayed contentedly on this small patch of grass, fully 100 sheep to the acre, for ten days whilst the shearers remained on strike.

The grass was growing as fast as they ate it.

The cause of this strike was interesting. There had been a slight shower of rain during the night at the woolshed.

It was only local and had not fallen where the sheep which were brought in to be shorn were. The shearers said the wool was wet, and refused to shear the sheep. When the wool is shorn and lying in the bins, it feels damp owing to the yolk [The fleece of a sheep is covered by an oily substance called “yolk”, which consists of wool grease and dried perspiration. – P.M.] on it, so three fleeces were spread on the table, one of that day’s shearing of supposedly wet sheep, and one of each of the two previous days, and the shearers were asked to say which fleece was wet. They unanimously chose the one shorn two days previously, before any rain had fallen.

The wet sheep question was a very vexed one. The shearers maintained that shearing wet sheep gave them rheumatism, but the fact was that no owner dared shear wet sheep, as the wool would eventually go off in spontaneous combustion.

I always maintained that the wet sheep question was a safety valve, like Hyde Park inflammatory oratory, and if there were plenty of wet weather and the shearing prolonged to double its ordinary length, it would not nearly double the price of shearing, as the shearers were paid by piece work. Only the shed hands’ wages increased. An ordinary shearing only cost fourpence-halfpenny a sheep, so if wet weather made the shearing double the length of time, it would not cost sixpence; and grass and water would be ensured for months ahead by the rain.

The shearers were also losers by rain, as they were on piece work and had to pay for their food all the time, and they lived like fighting cocks. They paid their cook somewhere up to £20 a week, and every shearer bought a box of Cockles' pills and ate as much as he could and then applied the pills.

The idea was that as they all paid equally they all tried to eat as much as they could.

The extraordinary thing was that during the first week five bags of flour would be consumed, and after that only two bags a week. The shearers got filled up the first week. The hours were long, and were later reduced to eight a day. The shearers worked from six to eight in the morning, and then had breakfast. The sight of these shearers putting in two hours of very hard work before breakfast convinced me of the value of early morning work.

When the strike started, my overseer posted notices on our boundary gates: "No rations given." It had been the custom to give rations if there was no work. A few men passed through and bought flour. They were given mouldy flour at one shilling a pound, when good flour was sixpence, and when they said it was mouldy, they were told that it was too good for strikers who would not work. The result was we were left alone, and were not molested in any way.

Only once did the strikers make any effort to do anything violent to my station.

A mob of one hundred and fifty men started out with the intention of wrecking us. I rode round my neighbours and borrowed rifles and ammunition. I was advised by them to show fight. One neighbour, who was a most peaceful man, vehemently incited me to bloodthirsty deeds. I called the small staff together, and they wanted to fight to a man. I thought it was very plucky, even against a hundred and fifty. However, the strikers got wind of our intentions, and never turned up. They got within twenty miles, rolled a big flood pipe into the water of a dam, and then disappeared.

At this time my station hands consisted of my overseer, who had broken his leg, a half-caste man and his wife in the kitchen, two young boys I had brought up from Victoria to work, a Chinaman gardener, a mattress maker who offered to work when the strike started, and a wool classer [Wool classing is an occupation for which people are trained to inspect and separate raw wool according to a fairly large number of specific characteristics. – P.M.].

The wool classer had a very strong delusion. He was fully convinced he was the Son of the Creator, and would always tell the same story if questioned. It was a rambling tale. He was the son of the Shah of Persia by his favourite wife, and he remembered wearing the crown once in the nursery. It was covered with wonderful jewels, but was too heavy for him. He was mixed up with the Rothschilds and came over to England to see them. He met Queen Victoria in the slums of Liverpool, and had a long chat with "Vic" as he familiarly called the Queen.

I used to stop the story as soon as I could, as I thought it was bad for him. The veins of his forehead would swell and his eyes sparkle, and no doubt he believed all he said. He had lost his money in droughts and it had affected him. This man said if the strikers shot at him the bullets would bounce back and kill them. He and the Chinese gardener split a pair of shears and each tied a blade on to a large stick ready to defend themselves. The shearers visited the Chinaman to induce him to leave his work, but the tables were turned when half a dozen shearers were seen bolting for their lives, chased by a shear blade on a stick with a Chinaman behind it. Which reminded me of the following story:

A man was seen running for his life in nothing but his shirt, with a man chasing him with a bowie knife. A spectator called out:

“Go it, Shirt Tails – Bowie Knife is gaining on you!”

I put on another Chinaman to ride round the fences to see if they were in good repair. I did this simply out of a spirit of devilment, to annoy the strikers. This man used to report his fences as follows: “All lound all li,” meaning: “All round, all right.”

There had been heavy floods, and I was surprised that the fences were in good repair and went round them; I found that one of them was washed down for half a mile and the sheep were “boxed” with their neighbours. I am afraid he wasn’t a very good boundary rider.

During this strike it was extraordinary how one got news with the few hands we had. The stations were fenced in square paddocks, large fields averaging five miles by five or more, the fences running north and south and east and west. At six a.m. my southerly boundary rider would meet the northerly boundary rider of the next station; at the same time, my northerly man would meet the man on the southerly boundary of the next station. These men would exchange news gathered the day before. Later one would meet an easterly and one a westerly neighbour, and, towards evening, the north and south men would meet; thus one would hear all that was happening for forty miles to the south and east, and the other forty miles to the north and west.

It was wonderful what news these men gleaned and passed on in this way. One knew everything that was happening in a block eighty miles by eighty miles. Of course these men were great experts at gathering and giving news like this. They had been doing it all their lives by chatting daily to the neighbouring boundary riders on their rounds.

The boundary riders were most interesting personalities. Each lived in a hut by himself; they were not fond of company. They were far from being fools, though; if one drew them out it was astonishing the resourcefulness and knowledge they had.

They used to come in once a week, on Saturday evening generally, camp the night in the men' huts, and get their week’s rations on Sunday, consisting of so much flour, tea, and sugar. They had to buy anything else; they could kill a sheep and salt it when they liked. I used to think at first: “Poor, lonely men, how they must enjoy their Saturday

night's chat with others and the company on Sunday!" – though Sunday mean I washing their clothes, as a rule.

I was mistaken about their attitude to society; they preferred to be alone. I discovered this fact for myself. I told a boundary rider that there was a camp of fourteen men coming out that afternoon for lamb marking. He did not look pleased, and I remarked on it.

"Why should I be pleased?" he said. "They'll only tell me a lot of lies and steal things."

Here was a new description of the habits of the human race as a whole, and, let us hope, not entirely true.

Thoroughly to appreciate this remark one should see an average boundary rider's hut. Walls six feet high of corrugated iron, gabled roof generally, inside about six feet by eight feet; a deal box for 1 table, a bed made of boards, a couple of blue blankets, a tin jug and basin, and a sixpenny looking-glass on a deal case, were all the furniture. There was no chair.

What there was to steal was a mystery to me; the only thing I could see was a spare pair of hobbles.

Sunday's laundry work consisted of washing a pair of white moleskin trousers, extremely comfortable to ride in, and a jumper, that is, a shirt with loose sleeves not quite reaching the elbow.

I can't remember if any wore socks; many did not. No collar, tie, or coat. It was too hot for luxuries; the temperature would always go over eighty degrees in the shade in the winter and up to one hundred and twenty degrees in the summer. In the summer, the sun's temperature was sixty-degrees hotter than these shade temperatures. The corrugated iron huts were unbearably hot during the day, but cooled off very quickly after sundown.

Every one spent the whole day in the saddle, which was the coolest way of passing the day, with a waterbag tied round the horse's neck – no lunch, for sandwiches got far too dry.

About this time I got a very good instance of the precocity of young Australia. A teamster, about the finest human being at his work that I ever saw, had a son – an undersized nipper of about fourteen – driving his second team, the boy's first attempt.

I was talking to the old man, who had finished yoking up his team. He said to me:

"Look at the nipper; he can't catch the colt."

The nipper certainly was in trouble, trying to catch a very lively draught horse.

The father called out, “Can I give you a hand?”

Back came the reply, “Give me a hand, you, you old fossil? Oh well, you might have a cut at him!”

The old man was inordinately proud of this – shall we say – independent speech. He winked at me and went off.

During a drought I bought relief country to put my sheep on, a cattle station in what was called the Desert – a large tract of country running in a belt about 100 miles wide between the sheep downs country and the coast country. This property was about 400 square miles and I paid rent of £200 a year for it.

I bought it on the usual understanding, walk In, walk out. That is, I paid cash, and my manager rode over and took possession on a certain day, and that finished the sale and transference of ownership. All that I had to do was to register my title at the Government Lands Office, which meant paying a fee of ten shillings – very much simpler than England’s Real Property laws.

I owned several properties, but I never saw a title-deed.

As regards the cattle, I accepted a “book muster”, that is, I accepted as the actual number bought the number shown in the station books. If one stipulated for a muster of stock and a count for delivery, it was customary to agree on the average value of the stock, and pay or receive the sum per head according to whether the stock were more or less than the number stated in the sale. My book muster said 4,000 head of cattle, but I knew they were in a state of starvation owing to want of feed and were dying wholesale. To have mustered and counted them would have meant many more deaths. I bought the property to save my sheep. Sheep will get a picking where cattle will die, and as an average thing, sheep will live for six months longer than cattle on the country, as they eat the short grass left. My main standby was the leaves of certain trees, which the sheep ate when the trees were cut down.

I sold the cattle at thirteen shillings a head, delivered in trucks on the railway. I delivered 1,600 into the trucks; the poor beasts were dropping dead in hundreds, and many more died in the railway trucks. Had rain come, I should probably have had about 3,000 cattle.

One of the most interesting sights was the spectacle of the sheep, which were split into mobs of 2,000, waiting close to a tree for it to fall, whilst one of my men was cutting it down.

In the morning when the axe began to chop, the sheep would be spread out nibbling at the short grass about half a mile away, but the first blow of the axe was like ringing a dinner bell; the sheep ran to the tree at once, and very soon after the tree was down

every leaf was eaten and the sheep would be standing round the next tree that was being cut down.

Our main trouble was conserving the water. This was before the days of bores, when the only water supply was by means of dams. At these dams we made a circular tank round the deep holes from which the earth was excavated, and fenced it off so that the sheep could not get into the water, otherwise they would have carried away on their fleeces as much as they drank. They were watered by windmills pumping the water into troughs. In a drought they used to come in to water only every second day because they had to go a long way back for their feed. I had one dam from which they went back fourteen miles before they came to feed.

The merino sheep, with their follow-the-leader gregariousness, were probably the only sheep that would, or could, have lived under such conditions. My furthest out paddock was appropriately named Wearyfoot. It was twenty miles from the homestead.

At one time I had water left in only one dam, and 70,000 sheep, which I put into the three paddocks leading into this dam. Opening the fences to give them the run of the three paddocks, I erected 200 yards of troughing, put on the centrifugal pump, and began to pump the water into the troughing as the sheep drank. The whole 70,000 sheep used to come and drink at once. As soon as the leading sheep smelt the water, they would begin bleating and gallop to the trough and start drinking. It was an extraordinary sight to see the heads packed round the troughing, every head touching the next on both sides of the troughing, several hundreds drinking at once. As they finished, they would draw off and start out for feed.

Sheep have a habit of travelling up wind, or if there is no wind, in one fixed direction – I have forgotten which, but I think it is east.

The sheep would all have drunk and be away in about an hour. I fancy this would be the largest mob that were ever watered and fed together, and, of course, nothing but necessity would have led to having them all together, because the weak ones, travelling on the tail, would fare badly, and the mob would run over and spoil a lot of grass.

Horses and cattle never like so well the feed on country after sheep have been over it; it is said the sheep's yolk gets into the grass. Be that as it may, one always kept one's horse-paddock free from sheep, if possible.

The usual method of watering sheep was by means of windmills which pumped water into 20,000-gallon tanks, delivering it into troughing. The supply was regulated by ball taps. If wind was absent for a week, the sheep got no water, and had to be let into the water-hole to drink.

I recollect two interesting experiences at the relief station I bought. The drought lasted a long time, and sheep became very scarce and consequently very valuable. I had 3,000 sheep running in one paddock that contained a lot of dense scrub. These sheep

disappeared, and we could never find a trace of them. It puzzled us very much, because 3,000 sheep on the loose sandy soil would leave tracks anyone could pick up. Search as we might, no trace could be found.

We argued that they could not have been stolen and taken through the boundary fence or we should have seen their tracks. Many years afterwards the mystery was explained to me. Sheep stealers had been at work. They built a lane with two fences, a blanket wide, for about half a mile, and laid down old wool packs and old blankets and let the sheep run over these, and so “blinded” their track.

Another story:

My manager caught two men with the meat of a beast they had killed and cut up. He telephoned for the police, the men were arrested, and they, and the meat, started for the local town. They camped a night on the way, although this was not necessary, as the police could easily have brought them and the meat in to the police station in the one day. In the morning the police went in catch their horses, leaving the prisoners with the meat. When the police returned, the meat was gone. When I remonstrated with the police, they said:

“These men gave us their word nothing would happen.”

The police magistrate dismissed the case, because, in the absence of any meat, he held there was no evidence. Apparently the word of the police was not evidence.

On another occasion, I arrested a man for killing a sheep. He was caught red-handed. I had to give evidence. The lawyer defending him had been Attorney-General in a Queensland labour government that lasted only six hours. The case was heard about two years after an Act had been passed making it compulsory to ear-mark sheep.

I went into this Act carefully at the time, but as I left the drafting and practical sheep working in my overseer, I had forgotten all about my ear-marks.

The ex-Attorney-General, in cross-examining, asked me how I knew the fleece was off my sheep.

“By the ear-mark,” I replied, without thinking.

Then it flashed across my mind I did not know what they were, so I had unwittingly committed perjury.

If the lawyer had asked me what my ear-marks were I should not have known, and should have lost my case.

Travellers used to kill sheep wholesale. One man told me he had 3,000 sheep killed, for the meat, in one year by travellers; and the most amusing story was of a man who was killing a sheep when the owner saw him.

Just as the owner rode up, the man, in the act of cutting the sheep's throat, looked round and saw him. So he turned to the sheep and said:

"Bite me, would you? – take that!" – and he cut his throat.

To return to the 70,000 sheep on one water, they were gradually reduced to 30,000 by deaths, and sales were made at a ruinous price. The artesian bores were just starting, and I decided to put down a bore, because the 30,000 sheep were ewes going to lamb in a couple of months, and it was necessary to get some good water before this event or all the sheep would be lost.

The boring plant needed water, and this I had to draw with two teams of horses from a waterhole six miles away. It kept these two teams very busy supplying the water. There are twelve or more horses in a team.

After about a month of continued, accursed sunshine – when it was either rain or ruin in another month, as the water-hole was giving out and there was neither grass nor water available within 100 miles – I had to arrange to bring the water from the nearest supply, twelve miles away.

This meant procuring eight 400-gallon tanks, four wagons, and four teams of horses – a big undertaking. I was cogitating how best to do this and was driving out to the bore, when I met my brother-in-law coming in. This looked as if something were wrong, so I asked him what was the matter.

"Nothing wrong," he said. "We've struck water."

There was no excitement in his voice, and, for a moment, I did not grasp the meaning.

Then it burst upon me that the bore was flowing and the sheep saved. The supply was about 1,000,000 gallons a day. So we got to work, ploughed drains, and carried the water in several directions over the country. The ewes were split up into mobs of lambing size, and ruin was temporarily staved off – and it had been getting very near. I say "temporarily" because lack of grass is the eventual proposition in a drought, and only rain can give grass.

These droughts were awful, especially when one knew that ten years before there was not enough grass on the whole of my 500 square miles to carry a single sheep.

During these droughts my overseer and I used to take a ride or drive round the country in different directions to see if we could find a patch where a thunderstorm had freshened up the grass, and if we found one, we used to put the sheep there.

Jeff Kruger

Bush scene, c. 1879

He would circle round sixty miles in one direction, and I would do likewise in another direction. One evening, after my return, having found a patch of green grass, and not only that, but wild flowers a foot high, a very unusual occurrence, my overseer came up and exclaimed:

“Any luck?”

I said, “Look in the back of the buggy.” I had put some wild flowers there.

He was delighted, especially when I said the thunderstorm was over a big enough area to carry all the sheep for two months. To grow wild flowers meant there had been a very heavy fall of rain.

These thunderstorms sometimes deluge the ground in a short space of time, several inches falling – providing feed for months, and within a week the green grass is a foot high. My eldest brother [George] once measured five inches of rain that had fallen in under half an hour – a waterspout.

On one occasion I had a very important lawsuit I must attend, and I started off in the morning. I arrived at the six-mile crossing of the creek, which had been dry, and there

had not been a sign of rain at the homestead. The crossing was in high flood, a roaring torrent, and I got swept off my horse and nearly drowned.

I recollect that once I saw very heavy clouds to the north-east. They appeared to be outside my boundary and over a neighbour's house, twenty miles to the north. I rang him up and asked if it were raining there.

Through the telephone I could hear the rain pouring on the iron roof. My neighbour said it had been raining for twenty minutes, that already the gauge measured an inch, and it looked like a very heavy fall, travelling right on to my country.

I rang up my agent in the township fifteen miles in the south, and told him to send out and buy two travelling mobs of sheep at once – 20,000 sheep at starvation prices. He bought the sheep, but, alas! the storm cleared off and never reached my boundary. I rode down to the sheep yards and told the overseer I had 20,000 sheep coming to our drought-stricken run, and we wondered where we could put them.

However, slight rains fell, and I sold the sheep soon afterwards, making sixpence a head profit. After a fall of rain, it was frequently problematical whether there would be a good show of grass, and as I was one of the few owners on the properties, I was in a good position. As soon as I was sure the grass was coming, I would buy sheep at the price they were in the market. The neighbouring managers corresponded with the owners living in Melbourne, 2,000 miles away, and they would reply instructing them to raise the price, but this took three weeks from the rains, and whilst this correspondence was going on, I used to buy what I could at the old prices.

There are many incidents that occur that one could mention to give an idea of the suffering and misery entailed by drought. For instance, sheep used to be trucked by train to relief country, and on cold winter nights – there would occasionally be frosts in Queensland – it would go hard with the starving sheep, and many drovers have told me how a number of sheep would apparently be dead when taken out of the trucks in the morning; as they were dragged out they were thrown into a heap to be burnt later.

In the winter there would often be a very quick rise in the temperature after sunrise; in fact, I have often said at sunrise, if one were looking away, the sun seemed to hit one in the back, so hot was it when it rose, even in the winter.

I have taken the hobbles off my horse early on a winter morning and they have been frozen stiff. An hour later, sitting in the saddle with my coat off, I have been sweating.

So with the sheep discarded as dead and frozen, the warmth would circulate the blood in some of them. There would be a writhing movement, and soon many of the mass would join the mob, and the rest would be burnt.

On the commons the dead stock had to be burnt. If a drover omitted to do this he was liable to a pound fine per dead carcass. I heard of a case where a drover was fined over £100 for leaving dead bodies unburnt.

Now I am going to tell a story of drought which, I must admit, seems rather tall. But many veracious eye-witnesses have vouched for the truth of it, and I am certain it is true.

A man painted his buggy green one day, and a lot of starving horses were put into a yard where the buggy was, and they ate every bit of the green paint off.

The story was so vouched for and believed, in fact, that it was suggested as a cure for drought, to put green spectacles on the sheep.

One more story of drought.

It was in 1902, at the end of four years' drought, the most universal and worst ever experienced in Australia. I had travelled from Melbourne to Queensland with one of my brothers. All the way up there were signs of the dreadful drought, even on an island in the sea one noticed the brown and dying leaves of the trees. Every face was gloomy; Australia's main industry, wool-growing, looked as if it, and the people with it, were perishing.

We arrived in Jericho, a township in the desert of Central Queensland. There were a number of bushmen on the platform – gaunt, sunburnt, lean and hungry, waistbelts tightened, and with the grim gaze of despair on every face.

The query was, how much longer would the trains run and bring up flour? And how much longer would they be able to earn wages to buy flour?

Things had got so bad that it looked as if the end were in sight, and they would soon perish of starvation in the bush. For some time all sheep and cattle had been too poor to be worth killing for food. Mutton and beef were being imported from New Zealand, and we were getting barrels of salt beef from Lakes Creek Freezing Works, 400 miles away, to keep us alive. Tinned potatoes were the only vegetables – no milk, no butter.

I shall never forget the haunted look of despair on those fine-looking bushmen's faces.

My brothers George and Charlie had a lot of sheep-stations and 300,000 sheep, the finest big flock of sheep in the world, but they were travelling all over Australia for food. On one property they were mushing up the Bottle Trees, a soft edible wood, and mixing molasses with it to feed the sheep.

Every day the expenses were increasing and the sheep decreasing. Out in the Never Never Country, past Boulia, where they say the birds fly backwards, they were keeping a camel in feed as the last connecting link with civilization. There had not been a drop of

rain for four years, and little children had never seen rain. My brother offered to sell me these properties, known as the Fairbairn Pastoral Co., for £60,000, and he added, "There is £30,000 cash in the bank for current expenses."

Being married with a family, I dared not risk it.

The drought broke soon after, and my brothers divided £60,000 profit the next year, and have done better ever since.

Australia's chronic condition is from dry to drought; in fact, the old saying was, "Seasons are bad, or damn bad, or bloody awful." The dry weather has its compensations – it eliminates disease amongst the stock.

The prices of wool and stock have risen very much since those days, as the world's demand for wool has increased with the world's increasing prosperity.

I sold my properties three or four years after this drought, and got what was then a record price for my places. The buyer, owing to still increasing prices, paid me off in three years out of the proceeds from the properties.

Ten years before that drought, there were some very good seasons, and the sheep increased so that every one was heavily stocked and there was no sale for surplus stock; hence they became a drug in the market.

The question arose, What were we to do with surplus stock? Our only saleable stock previously had been fat wethers, four years old; these were sent to the butcher, and the old fat ewes were boiled down for their tallow.

The buyers used to give us 6*s.* for fat wethers with fourteen months' wool on them, with a six months bill, and the tallow from the ewes was sold in London at the market price.

After the War, one got 2*s.* 6*d.* a pound for the 10 pounds of wool on the sheep, and sold the wethers at two years old, off shears, for £1 10*s*. *od*., or £2 10*s*. *od*. a sheep, instead of 6*s*.

During this congestion of too many sheep and no buyers, I boiled down 10,000 splendid ewes, and had to pay a small cheque to settle the loss on the transaction. The ewes did not pay expenses; recently they would have brought £20,000.

To relieve congestion, one of my brothers sheared his wethers (also 10,000) and gave them to a shearer to take off the run. When I found I had netted a loss, I told my brother he had done better than I had by giving his sheep away.

"No, I didn't," he replied, "because the shearer could not arrange to drive them away and they scattered on the run!"

There we have the extremes of sheep farming in Australia.

Now that wool has gone to such a price, artificial wool and silk are being manufactured; possibly the end will again be ruin to the sheep farmer. Thus drought, good seasons, and high prices all eventually reach the same destination, or, to parody a well-known saying: “All roads lead to ruin.” This was written two years ago, and now, alas! has proved only too true.

Here is another example of the ups and downs of the Australian pioneers. It is the case of a man who took up a sheep-station in the early days, spent all his money on it, stocking it and putting up improvements. To carry on, he had to borrow money from the bank to the extent of £60,000. He had a very fine property, but droughts, the curse of sheep farming, struck him heavily, and the banks could not lend him any more money, so they had to take the station over.

The owner had to sell all his effects except a buggy and a pair of horses, which he kept to drive his family and himself away in, when down came the rain and made the place so boggy that he could not get away.

If only the rain had come before the bank had taken possession, he would have been all right. After the rain, the bank put the property up for sale. This was the other property my father inspected when he bought the Queensland one; he advised my uncle to buy it, which he did for £90,000. He took a clip of wool off, and more than paid all working expenses thereby. Six months or so afterwards he sold the property for £220,000, and a few years later a quarter of the property brought £250,000.

Rain a few months earlier would have been worth £1,000,000 to the original owner. This uncle was for a long time a very lucky man; everything turned to money. He put all his money into cattle and had a huge number. On one occasion he had no less than 70,000 fat cattle ready for sale. After the War they would have been worth over £500,000. But droughts, drop in the price of cattle, and the rabbit pest told a sad tale. Worst of all, the Government determined to put up a rabbit-proof fence across Queensland in the south to stop the inroad of rabbits, which were coming from the south and fast spreading north. The Government erected this fence just north of his property and so fenced the rabbits on to him.

As I have said previously, the rabbits eat all the grass and foul the ground; a wiry thistle is the product of their manure. The Government taxed the lessees to pay for the fence, and so my uncle had to pay for having the rabbits fenced on to him. The rabbits are an awful pest and have ruined many a property.

The story goes that an Englishman coming in Australia said to an Australian:

“You have an awful pest in Australia, haven’t you?”

“Yes,” said the Australian.

The Englishman: “The rabbits?”

The Australian: “Worse than the rabbits. The Scotch.”

I am a descendant of this pest!

On one occasion, I remember my neighbor getting a very heavy thunderstorm on a patch of 100 square miles of country. That storm gave in him an abundance of grass for all his sheep, and made all the difference to the grass for the next eighteen months, whilst the stations all round were drought stricken, and the occasional light rains did no good to us. This patch of country, however, kept fresh and green owing to the thunderstorm.

Had that thunderstorm been ten miles farther north, it would have been worth £100,000 to me, because it would have meant two clips of wool off 100,000 sheep, and two lots of lambs – say 50,000; and one could sell the old ewes to the drought-stricken neighbours.

The neighbouring station belonged to a New Zealand company. This company was forced, by the New Zealand Government, to sell to the Government a very valuable property under a law called the Compulsory Resumption of Freehold Estates.

The general manager of this company told me that he offered to buy back the property for £70,000 more than the Government had resumed it for.

The money obtained for this New Zealand property was invested in Australia, which was suffering from its worst and most widespread drought, and so they bought their properties very cheaply.

They bought a cattle station for £30,000, and turned it into a sheep-station, stocking it with the lambs that were born on the patch of grass made by the thunderstorm I have mentioned. No doubt they took many times £30,000 off that former cattle station, and the properties they bought in Australia through the forced sale of the New Zealand property must have been worth at least £1,000,000 more than the New Zealand property.

A similar law was passed in Victoria. Under this, one man sold to the Government 8,000 acres at £8 an acre, and the Government sold it in blocks at £11 an acre. The value of the land at that time was £5 an acre, so the public were done out of £6 an acre. The Government netted £3 an acre and the original owner got £3 an acre more than its value.

Another owner sold a large property worth £5 an acre for £13 an acre. Again the Government legislating for the poor man defeated its own end.

In other parts the law dropped the price of land, and the big men bought and increased their holdings, again defeating its object. So it will always be. Governments will legislate but intelligent individuals will prosper.

I used to spend one day in the house answering the weekly mail. The sweat would drop on to the paper as I was writing. The paper was so dried-up that the point of the pen would go through it if one were not careful.

The best illustration of the dryness was the sugar in the stores; it would get into one hard block. The store-keeper had to cut it with an axe. One of the barometers was this sugar. The store-keeper would say, “It looks like rain,” and we all knew the sugar was getting soft. Probably there wasn’t a cloud in the sky, but the moisture was blowing in from the sea 400 miles away on the nearest side. Another barometer was the gidea tree; this threw out a strong and disagreeable smell before rain.

My overseer and book-keeper used to sleep in the quarters and had a short walk to the house for breakfast. There were some gidea trees about 300 yards away, and sometimes, as they came in to breakfast, the men would say, “It’s going to rain. The gidea is smelling strong.”

By the smell of the gidea and the softness of the sugar we would get a pretty good idea of what amount of rain was likely to fall.

In some places, in droughts, a horrible expedient was occasionally resorted to. There would not be enough grass for all the sheep and the stock routes had no feed or water, so there was no get-away, and it was necessary to get rid of the worst sheep to try to save the food for the rest till rain came. The 10,000 oldest and worst sheep were put into a yard and left to die of starvation. It sounds horrible, but killing the sheep would cost sixpence a head; besides, a heavy storm might come any moment and the sheep that were still alive would be reprieved.

When the grass got dry and of little feeding value, and the water low and boggy, the weak sheep would come in to drink, sink into the mud, and stick there. Practically the main work in droughts was to visit the boggy water-holes and pull out the bogged sheep, knowing one would find them back next day if no rain fell.

It was a gruesome business, but one got accustomed to it.

I once pulled out the same old ewe day after day for twenty-seven successive days. Each day she got weaker and took longer to get the use of her legs.

Soon the inevitable crow came and sat beside the poor bogged brute, waiting to pick its eyes out. As soon as the sheep became really enfeebled the crow ate its eyes.

One has to experience these things to understand them, and a stranger is apt to think the rough bushman very heartless and callous, though he really is nothing of the sort.

There was a large dam in front of the house, and for months in a drought 27,000 miserably weak brutes used to stream along the fence daily, a few yards away from the house, into the water. Watching the poor brutes go by in single file for hours was very disheartening.

The merino sheep is a marvellously gregarious animal and always sticks in the flock as long as possible, so they would string in for hours. I would go down and round the dam and pull out the bogged ones after their drink. I remember once when pulling out the bogged sheep, finding a cat, a horse, a cow, and an emu in the water. These had come there to die. One would sometimes find a sick animal awaiting its end in the water, but to find four different species awaiting their end beside the sheep was over the odds.

One of the saddest things in a drought is the fact that the stock are becoming less and the expenses greater daily, and one never knows whether it will last long enough to ruin one, or whether it will break to-morrow.

The habit the crows had of following the sick stock reminds me of a trip I once took with my overseer Anderson to see if we could find any country on which to put our sheep. We travelled over four hundred miles, and met the same story all the way. All along the roads were dying and dead sheep, horses, and cows. The sheep would try to get up out of our way, as if from politeness.

As we travelled on, we came to a dead goat and a dead emu. Then we came to a grave, and the overseer exclaimed, “Now the men are beginning to die!”

It was a lonely spot, and Anderson, after commenting on the loneliness of the place, told me how once he thought he was going to die. He felt very ill and he was getting everything ready for shearing, the busy time on a sheep run.

“At last,” he said, “the crows began to follow me and I knew I was going to die, and it made me damned wild, as I had not got things nearly ready for shearing. But I got so bad I felt I was dying, so I tied my horse up and lay down on the road to die. It was a lonely place, just like this,” he proceeded, “and I stuck my legs well out on the road for anyone to see, so that they would save my horse.”

The story ended there.

Now let us examine it. It was the first year he was in charge of preparing for shearing, and he had overworked himself, and as he tired he got seedy, and then he began to think he might knock up.

Then the thought came, “I will die before I give in;” and then, “I wonder if I am dying?” and then, “Those crows, yes, they are following me, so I am dying;” and then he lay down to die, exposing the prospective corpse so that it would be seen, and his horse rescued.

No doubt he lay quiet for an hour or two and the rest pulled him round, and he got up and went on, having broken the train of thought that was overpowering him, the fear that he would not get his work done in time.

He was tired – he would get ill – he would die.

He was a most remarkable man – never happy, never at rest except when working.

The individuality of the bushman is very marked. One does not get anything like it in the close civilization of town when one spends all one's time in the free, democratic countries, either indoors filling in forms and cheques for the tax-gatherer, or out of doors where all one does is to watch the policeman's hand to cross the street.

Every morning my overseer would come in to breakfast at break of day, and put the clock on five minutes, regardless of whether it was correct or not. I used to put it back half an hour every now and then, to keep it near time.

It was a farce, anyway, as one breakfasted at or near daybreak, and then the men went to the stock yard, where I gave the overseer the orders, and he divided them amongst the men. All were in the saddle and off north, south, east, or west just after sunrise, and all returned just before sunset, and walked up to the house for their evening meal just after sundown. So the clock was quite useless, and outside one could always tell the time by one's shadow.
The overseer's horse was always very fat, and he never rode under forty miles a day, often more. He rode all day long at a jog, and this was his one idea of rest. He could not sit still on Sundays, when the men were supposed to rest and breakfast was an hour later. He would be doing one odd job after another all day long – drafting horses and distributing them to the station hands. The station hands used to get two horses apiece and change them weekly.

This brings me to an incident that I had much pleasure in telling the Bishop of Rockhampton recently. There was an agitation to start a Bishopric in the district, the Bishopric of Rockhampton. I was managing a sheep-station that belonged to my father, and one of my brothers was general manager. He told me all the stations would have to subscribe to the Bishop's fund.

I objected that we were four hundred miles from Rockhampton and that we should derive no benefit. My brother closed the argument by saying:

"We must support some form of religion."

A few days afterwards, one of the station hands said that he wanted another horse in place of one of his. I asked him what was the matter with the horse, and he replied:

"He's too religious; he's always on his knees."

To which I replied, “Jim, we must support some form of religion.” I gave him another horse and sent off a cheque for the fund.

Not only would the overseer have the spare horses brought in and drafted, but he would do all sorts of jobs to fill in this day of rest. If there were any unbranded colts among the mob that came in, he would brand them, and unsex any males. The branding consisted of making irons red hot, irons with “P.E. 9”, the station registered brand, and with the number next to the last number branded, such as 124. These red-hot irons seared these letters and numbers into the colts’ skins.

The overseer would frequently kill a bullock on Sunday, cut it up, and salt it, and when he had got the hands to do many jobs, and could think of nothing more to fill up the day of rest he would complain that Sunday was a long day with nothing to do.

“Sunday” did not always coincide with the Sabbath Day. If there was any special work to be done on the real Sunday the men would do it and have “Sunday” later in the week. The mail arrived once a week and that regulated the days and kept them right, but with travelling mobs of sheep and cattle – very monotonous work – one frequently lost count of the days. Cases have been known where men travelling with a mob of sheep have met others going in the opposite direction and both have been wrong in the days, one lot of men keeping Tuesday and the others Thursday as Sunday.

In those days there were long distances covered with travelling mobs of sheep and cattle. One of the longest journeys was done by a travelling mob of cattle that was stolen from Mount Cornish, the neighbouring station to mine. This trip is mentioned in “Robbery Under Arms”. They sold the cattle in Adelaide, but were fools enough to sell a pedigree bull they had stolen, and so they were caught. I don’t know how far it was, but it must have been well over 1,000 miles.

The manager of a cattle station I bought had very bad eyes. He told me he travelled with that mob of cattle to Adelaide to see a doctor about his eyes. He saw the doctor, who examined him, took his fees, and advised him to give up drinking tea. Practically all Australians, especially people in the bush, drink a lot of tea, so that the doctor thought he was safe in his advice, but the patient told me he had never drunk tea in his life.

The doctor’s advice was hardly worth the fee, let alone travelling a hard trip with a lot of cattle thieves for fully eight months, and then a thousand miles or more to get back.

One day I was riding with my station manager on that cattle property when suddenly my horse shied violently.

My manager asked me if I knew what the horse was shying at. Upon my saying no, he told me two of the manager’s children were hidden in a bush.

They were practically wild and were hiding, having hardly ever seen a strange human being. That will convey some idea of the life in the bush in the old days.

CHAPTER X

CATTLE AND HORSES

Cattle station people had a wild life for many years. It was not a paying game, and their noses were tied to the grindstone.

I recall a queer instance of an agent's idea of relative values of sheep-stations and cattle stations.

The agent would send up brown sugar and other cheap goods to a cattle station, and white sugar and better goods to a sheep-station, charging both the same price.

That is what they did to me. I don't think it was dishonesty, merely a custom.

On a sheep-station one could sometimes get a glass of whisky, but it was always rum on a cattle station.

I knew one owner of a cattle station who was rather a quaint person. He occasionally came into town to a race meeting. He travelled very lightly – in fact, it was generally said he had only a bottle of rum and a toothbrush in his bag. He never wore socks.

On one occasion he owned the favourite for the big race at the meeting. So his friends told him that, as owner of the favourite, he must wear socks. They took him to the store and he said he wanted socks. Having been shown several lots, he decided on one pair. On being asked whether he would have a dozen pair, he replied in tones of astonishment:

"A dozen pair? Do you think I am a —— centipede?"

Well, the race meeting came to an end, and Bill won, and no doubt spent all his winnings, and far more, in entertaining his friends. In fact, in those days the bushmen would come in to the race meetings with cheques for six months' wages, spend every penny, and go back to "work a dead horse" for six months. That meant they had run up bills that would take six months' wages.

Bill had to catch a coach and drive sixty miles to his cattle station, starting at seven o'clock in the morning. He came down to the bar at six a.m. with a bad head and longing for rum and milk.

I had this story from the barmaid herself.

"Mr. ——," she said, "came into the bar in nothing but a very short singlet, and asked for a rum and milk; I refused to serve him until he got his pyjamas. So, after begging in vain for a rum and milk for some time, he went off and got his pyjamas and laid them

triumphantly on the counter, saying: ‘Now for the rum and milk,’ which, of course, I had to give him.”

These are only a few instances of the ups and downs of the Australian squatter, and one knows many hundreds of them. The sheep-station that my father bought and round which he put the wallaby fence, had a trouble fairly recently. A class of fly known as the “bot fly” has become a sheep pest of late years, killing the sheep in large numbers. No less than ten thousand died from this fly pest during one year recently on that station.

In the winter holidays of my last year at school I went up to this station. The wire netting fence was just being completed to keep the wallaby out, and the last 100 yards of wire was ready to be put up. My eldest brother [George] was manager; he organised a kangaroo drive to drive the kangaroos out of this opening before closing it. He gathered the station hands, and we started a drive from the farthest point from the opening, spreading out half a mile apart, and driving the kangaroos ahead of us by galloping across to each other and cracking stock whips.

We kept at this all day, with the kangaroos jumping along ahead of us. We camped for the night about halfway. In the morning the hobbles were frozen on the horses when we caught them, but by nine o’clock we were sweating in our shirt-sleeves in the saddle.

We gathered a huge mob of kangaroos ahead of us and put most of them through the opening – when nearing the opening some of the kangaroos began to break back, and this led to individual chases.

After a short distance the horseman would catch up to the kangaroo, take his stirrup leather in his hand, and strike the kangaroo with the iron between the ears; even a slight blow was always fatal.

A kangaroo travels with extraordinarily long leaps of his hind legs, and the tail strikes the ground very hard, and apparently helps progress. He appears to take about one leap to three strides of a horse and the movement looks very uncanny. He does not go far after pursuit has ceased.

There is a story of a young Englishman chasing his first kangaroo. It kept just ahead and stopped when he did. The English lad gave up after a time, but was heard to say he could have caught the kangaroo if he had had his running shoes on.

I remember once riding a horse along a boundary fence in an open plain. Suddenly he stopped, and I looked at the fence and saw that we were at the identical spot where I had untied the wires and gone through with that horse a year before. I could tell the wires had been tied up by me, but there was nothing to tell the horse. Everything was open for miles, no trees, no landmarks at all. That horse had only been there once and that was a year before. He was my private hack; no one else ever rode him, and that was the only time I was on that far-away fence.

My experience tells me that animals never forget, savages rarely, and men who can't read or write less rarely, but the man who uses shorthand nearly always forgets. The principle is perfect. Civilization means absolute destruction to all the senses. I am not going to say I can construct anything better than civilization. Bolshevism certainly does not seem to fill the bill.

Breaking in a draught horse was simple. A wagon with several tons on it and the wheels locked; a team of sixteen horses, the other fifteen perfectly quiet; a pair of winkers and collar harness would be put on the unbroken horse. He would then be yoked into the team by being fixed into the chains, which were slipped on to the harness by two hooks. The horse was fixed into the team by chains from his harness on to the horse's harness behind, and chains on to him from the horses in front. The driver would start the team, and the movement and the sound of the chains rattling against him would frighten the horse into pulling.

Frequently the horse would be hobbled, and so, his powers hindered, he would pull his hardest and go on till fairly exhausted, and then settle down and accept the inevitable.

We had two extraordinarily wild draught horses. They went by the names of the Wild Irishman and his Mate. Occasionally they would come into the stock yard with a mob of horses. Whenever fresh horses were brought in the ladies would hope they were in the mob, and they could tell by the commotion amongst the horses as soon as they were yarded, although the stock yard was half a mile away.

If they were there, the ladies and all hands would go down to have a look at them. Whilst with the other horses they kept charging round the yard. A gate would be opened and they would charge into the next yard. Once by themselves in a clear yard they did not hesitate a moment, but galloped straight at the rails, seven feet high, and jumped out, smashing the top rail. Then away they would go in a straight line, jump the wire fence round the horse paddock, and keep straight on out of sight at full gallop.

They could jump and gallop marvellously! We determined to try to break them in, and stationed the best stock riders to wheel them, and reckoned by wheeling them we could keep them circling inside the riders who were stationed wide, and so let them run themselves to a standstill.

They smashed out of the yard as usual and were off at full gallop. The first stockman wheeled them, and the next the same, and the third headed them back to the yard. They thundered down towards it, their coats shining with sweat. They went straight for the wire fence and cleared it, still at a wild gallop.

I was stationed in the paddock they had jumped into and wheeled them at the bank of the dam. We expected it would wheel them, being much too big an obstacle to jump, we thought. On straight at it they thundered, and without a moment's hesitation, with giant bounds, they both cleared it, without touching it at all. I was quite close beside them, and can only say it was the most marvellous and glorious sight I ever saw. They were a

chestnut and a bay, but as they disappeared in a lather they looked to be white in colour.

It was a thrilling leap and apparently quite beyond the bounds of possibility. They not only accomplished this incredible leap but they flew it in their stride, their bodies high over the bank, and their speed unchecked.

They had beaten us. On they went out of sight at the same mad gallop. They went straight on to our boundary, jumping the wire fences without touching them.

That afternoon they were seen on one of my brother's stations over fifty miles away.

They came back; horses always will. They have a homing instinct, and frequently if a horse disappeared he would be found on the place where he was bred.

Horses are queer brutes with very little brain power. I am sure horses with winkers on do not even know they draw the buggy they are yoked to and unyoked from. It means nothing to them.

Let a bush horse's winkers get loose so that he can see the buggy and men chasing him, and he at once takes fright and bolts. Of course, a tame old horse would not do much, but try a young one, and open the winkers suddenly, and if you don't conclude he never knew the buggy was there previously, you will be hard to convince.

We tackled the Wild Irishman and Mate once more. This time we widened our stock riders, thus turning the horses on a bigger circle. At last we were successful, and galloped them to a standstill. We put them into the crush, two fences, seven feet high and just wide enough to get a horse in; we cross-hobbled them, and side-hobbled them, and yoked them into the team. After a time the side hobbles were removed, and later on the front ones. The Wild Irishman never came out of the collar; when we yoked him in the team, he pulled till his heart broke and he dropped down dead.

Another set of rogues were a pair of ponies my father-in-law gave my wife to drive. They turned out the most marvellous pair of rogues I ever saw.

They had the knack of acting together in a flash, with absolutely no warning. The first time they tried this trick on me, I was leading them by the winkers with the throat straps unbuckled. In a flash I found myself with the winkers in both hands and the ponies galloping up the bush.

Every one was frightened to drive them except me. I had found out the cure for their roguery. I was once in a hurry when driving them into the local town to attend a police court case, and choosing an awkward place, they bolted. Instead of trying to pull them up, I let the whip into them and kept them going. They never bolted again.

I used to drive them in the lead of a four-in-hand team. I had my horse-breaker with me one day when we were journeying sixty miles. After we had gone about thirty miles we came to a bore stream, just the place for a lark, so I was on the look-out. As they started to cross the stream, they made a right-angle jump at a gallop, but I shortened the off-rein sharply and dropped the whip on to the near-side pony whilst they were still in the air and they swung straight, and on we went. It was about the quickest work I ever did; if they had landed at right angles, the pole would have broken. The horse-breaker commented flatteringly on the driving.

My overseer reported that he thought one of these ponies, which was very young, was getting foals, so I told him to examine and operate if necessary to prevent him getting stock. On examination, an operation was found to be necessary. The next season my overseer reported that there were more foals belonging to the pony, and a further operation was performed. In these two seasons he got over thirty foals, and unsexing him turned out to be a bad day's work, as the foals made most perfect ponies. They were very powerful, very fast, and, strangely enough, of the quietest dispositions. They practically did not want any breaking in and they could perform the most wonderful journeys. If we could have established the type they would have been wonderfully valuable. They were so quick and clever that they would have made perfect polo ponies.

Talking to my overseer one day, I remarked on their capacity for long journeys, and he said he had ridden one of them 100 miles in the day, but my eldest brother [George] had a horse that held the record. It was ridden just over 100 miles in the day – was hobbled before being let go, and turned up next morning in the stockyard where it had started with the hobbles still on. In those days there were very few fences, and of course the horse would take a bee line back and the hobbles would be broken. This horse would be ridden and then turned out for a spell, but it would be seen running round the paddock all day when turned out – no doubt some brain trouble, very much like one of the boundary riders, Pussy Cat – so called because he used to call out for pussy cats on moonlight nights. This man had a smash in his skull and had a silver plate put in. He would go days together without a feed and was a very hard worker, and as fat as anyone in a cold climate, and looked apoplectic in a climate where all the others looked lean and gaunt. I fancy it must have been something to do with the silver plate and some abnormal action of the brain.

Again, my overseer Anderson was only at rest when riding 40 miles or more a day at a jog, and strangely enough his old horse Aleck was always fat. Forty miles at a jog is a very tiring day's work to most people.

Then take Charlie Rowell, the 6 days go-as-you-please [a long-distance race where competitors are allowed to run or walk at their own discretion. – P.M.] champion. He did over 600 miles in 6 days and always ran 25 miles in the first 3 hours, and once ran 60 miles on the track before breaking into a walk. His trial was a run of 50 miles, and if he beat 6 hours he reckoned he was fit. (See sporting papers of the 80's.)

Charlie often ran alongside me when I was coaching crews. One day I arranged for several of the Cambridge eight to run with him and all to talk to him in turn and see if we could knock him out by talking, but it was hopeless. To my first question, which was, “How far can you run like this?” he replied, “I have never run more than ninety-six miles at this pace.” I left for Cambridge.

At shearing time certain extra hands were put on amongst the musterers to tackle the buckjumpers.

It was a fine sight seeing these men saddling their mounts – the quiet, cautious way they caught the horse and put the bridle on, and then the saddle. The rider, with the reins in one hand, would take the saddle and slip it over the horse’s back very carefully, slowly, and quietly, holding the horse’s head towards him so that the horse could not see the saddle going on the other side, and also so that it could not cow-kick him – that is, kick the back leg forward. I’ve had a horse do it to me, so I know it can be done.

The Queensland horse was only broken in on the one side, and no one ever thought of going up on the off side to a horse, and never, by any chance, would anyone go behind a horse’s heels. Though not kickers from vice, they might kick from fear, as they were practically unbroken behind or on the off side.

I remember on one occasion the manager of one of our sheep-stations saying at breakfast:

“You’ll see a fine bit of rough riding after breakfast.”

My brother [George] was the big boss, or general manager of our properties. He and I went to the stock yard, and there we saw a black fellow saddling a chestnut mare. She was rolling fat. The overseer said to me:

“You’ll see some men riding between here and heaven.”

It was a fine sight. There were six crack riders tackling the six worst outlaws on the station. They always gave a wonderful show, and it was the great day of the year on a sheep-station.

As we walked up to where the black boy was saddling the chestnut mare, my brother said to the manager:

“The saddle won’t stay on that horse without a crupper [a piece of tack used on horses to keep a saddle from sliding forward. – P.M.]; tell him to get a crupper.”

But the black was mounting; up went the horse’s back and down went its head – a couple of props – one fierce buck – and the girth burst; the black fellow was reversed in the air, feet above him, saddle between his legs, and at the full length of the reins, and whilst he was in this position the manager called out, “Go and get a crupper.”

Down came the black, and he walked straight off and got a crupper; it was wonderful to realise he had heard the manager.

Some blacks are very fine riders. I knew one black boy who could ride anything and was never thrown by the fiercest buckjumper, but he would never mount a horse a second time that had bucked badly with him.

Cattlemen do some very fine work. To the ordinary human being scrub dashing is a marvellous feat. Horseman will gallop after cattle through dense scrub where the trees are so close together that a horse can turn round only with difficulty.

The horseman lets the horse – a good stock horse – go, and simply sees that his own knees don't hit the trees. He swings them on to the horse out of the way; one cannot describe this wonderful sight – it must be seen to be realised what a scrub dasher can do.

A feat that only a very few of the cleverest cattlemen acquire, and far more difficult than anything that was seen at the Rodeo at Wembley, is throwing a bullock by the tail. The horseman gallops alongside the beast and catches it by the tail, and with a quick twist, while all the legs are in the air, destroys the beast's balance and down he comes. The art lies in timing the twist so as to catch the beast with all its legs in the air. Cattle-throwing, like all athletics, has timing, touch, and balance as its basis.

We had a member of the great Watson family working on one of our stations. I was sitting on the rails of the stock yard beside him watching the rough riding. There was a lull in the proceedings, and Watson said to me:

"I wonder what this colt would do if I jumped on his back?"

An unbroken colt was standing below.

Before I could reply, Godfrey Watson had dropped on to the colt's back, much to every one's astonishment. Of course, he didn't stay there long.

Every member of the Watson family could pick up a snake by the tail and crack its head off.

Godfrey, on one occasion, picked up a snake, put its head in his mouth, and wound the snake round his neck. One bite from the snake meant death in a few hours.

The father was master of the Melbourne Hounds and starter of the Victorian Racing Club, He was a wonderful martinet. I remember one of his sons describing a "needle" before racing, saying: "Just before going out for a race you get that way – you take no interest in anything else; you would not go out to see your father hanged."

Jack, George, and Billy, the three eldest sons, were three of the finest specimens of humanity I have ever seen. Jack, I was told, went up amongst the wild blacks in the Northern Territory and shot six and hung their scalps round his waist to overawe the other blacks. He got a longer lease of life in consequence, but they killed him in the end. Like all the rest of the family, Jack was a rare dare-devil.

I remember the first time I saw these three brothers. They were playing football against my school. They all had a habit of picking up their opponents and throwing them on the ground to see if they would bounce, but though they seemed to try with all their opponents, they never got one to bounce. With all their dare-devilry, they were the nicest and kindest of men.

Billy Watson, describing a drought, said to me: “We used to kill a beast every week for meat, and as they got poorer, we had to put the meat through a sausage machine, it was so tough. At last the meat got so tough it would not go through the sausage machine, so we stopped killing.”

Jack used to get under his buggy and lift it and carry it down to the dam to wash it.

He would also dive off a tree fifty feet high into shallow water.

Chinamen were very hard on horses, and they and parsons had the reputation of giving horses the sorest backs.

We had many interesting and amusing experiences with Chinamen. We always kept a Chinaman gardener; no white man was any good at gardening in Central Queensland. Of course, it was only vegetables that were grown, and there were many pests and troubles to be fought. Frequently the Chinaman would work all night watering the garden in dry weather. Besides the insect pests being innumerable, the cows often used to step over the fence and eat up the garden.

I remember once seeing the Chinaman shrieking with laughter and talking to the store-keeper. It turned out that the cows had eaten up the garden once more, and he had come up to the store-keeper to get his cheque and go, as the cows had beaten him. Luckily, the fact of having executed a gorgeous swear in English tickled his risible faculties, and his wrath evaporated in laughter and he stayed on.

After my marriage I engaged a Chinese cook. He was a good cook, but played on his imperfect knowledge of English with “No savee, Lily Missy,” when he did not want to understand.

“Lily Missy” on one occasion went to the Chinese gardener and brought him in as interpreter. The gardener rejoiced in the unusual name of Harry King; he spoke good English, got drunk, and was generally “all the same Englishman.” Bringing him in as interpreter finished the “no savee” of Jimmy.

It was a very good sign if a Chinaman got drunk, as some occasionally did. It showed that they did not take opium.

Jimmy, the cook, had to feed a pig. This entailed work, so one day he let the pig go. To his dismay – if Chinamen have dismay – the pig followed him about for a time, but eventually it retired into the bush.

One day my overseer came and told me he had run the pig down with his horse, and asked me to come and help him to catch it.

The pig was in a water-hole close by, so I walked down beside the overseer on his horse. As soon as I arrived in sight of the pig, he charged me, coming straight between my legs and tripping me up. The pace and power of that pig were very surprising, and I strongly advise every one to treat wild pigs, or tame ones gone wild, with every respect.

An odd Chinaman would turn up occasionally, looking for a gardener's job. Sometimes they would fraternise with the gardener and then they would pass the night together. When they did not fraternise they were not of the same race and did not speak the same language. A Chinaman was very particular about his food, and always cooked for himself. Occasionally before the days of White Australia [the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, which made it very difficult for all except those from Britain to immigrate to Australia. – P.M.], I had a Chinaman working at lamb marking, or at other times when we wanted extra hands we took on Chinamen, and they would always cook for themselves.

The Dawson River was sixteen miles wide – if I remember right – where the railway crossed it; anyway, it was many miles wide and we had to be rowed across in boats. Sheep and cattle had been washed away wholesale, and many poor beasts were caught in the trees, where we could hear them bellowing in the distance, a heart-rending noise which just went on till they expired. Every now and again one of the men rowing would say to the others, "That one has gone," meaning it was quiet where they had heard a bullock bellowing previously.

Of course the traffic was badly disorganised and only those who had to travelled, as it was a very arduous job.

My eldest brother [George] was the first passenger in the flood. He had quite a fight to prevent a snake getting into the boat. But his worst experience was that he had nothing to eat all day, and in the evening, when the train stopped at a railway station, the guard would not let him go across to the hotel a few hundred yards away as he had very strict instructions to proceed at once when orders arrived. Orders arrived early in the morning and he started off. After going a few miles he stopped the train, lit a fire, and cooked himself breakfast – pleasant for his starving passenger! One could not risk missing the train, as they only went once a week.

I remember once in later years when travelling in a motor car, finding a river in flood, which I had to cross with horses and a buggy. The publican got me a buggy and pair of horses, and the driver, who appeared half drunk, asked me if I was his passenger.

I said, “I hope to God I am not!”

“Oh,” he said, “you never know who you will meet in the bush.”

Having stacked my luggage high, off we went. He certainly was a most humorous chap. He had a cheery and clever quip for every passing team, and they were numerous, as the flood had just got low enough to allow them to cross the river.

The passage across was marked by white posts, and if one went to the right of them it meant being swept away and drowned. The driver allowed the horses to wander, and when they were just about to go off I called his attention. He looked at me and said:

“You are not frightened, are you?”

“No, I am not afraid,” I replied.

Had I been I am sure it would have been goodbye. He straightened the horses and we crossed.

In the course of conversation we eventually discovered we had been at the same school.

Then he said, “Who are you?” I told him.

“You are one of the Fairbairns,” he said, “and I thought you were a Roman Catholic priest and I nearly drowned you!” So he was meditating a finish when the horses were going downstream.

He belonged to one of our best families, but I won’t mention the name. His story was a very sad one. He had married and then he went out into the back country and took up a cattle station, and was getting it shipshape for his wife to come up when he got news that she had a baby and that she and the baby had both died. He took to drink – and that and droughts ruined him. He got a job as overseer on another station. This was all far away out in the gulf country. Then he took to driving a coach, and on one occasion he told me he was driving a governess on the coach when she asked him what had brought him to this. He said:

“I could not help it, I turned to her and said, ‘Women’ – and it was drink all the time.”

The coach failed and he had a dozen horses left. Drinks were one shilling apiece, on the never never, on “outside” country where he was, and he heard they were only sixpence apiece “inside”, so he started for the sixpenny drinks, selling a horse at a time

for expenses. He arrived in the sixpenny drinks with two horses, but two Chinamen knocked him on the head and stole the horses.

On one occasion we all met at Muttaburra, a bush township, for the races. It poured heavily all night. My eldest son was only two or three years old [probably 1899. – P.M.]. Our room was flooded out, and we had to wait a week because wheeled traffic could not move before as the river was in too high a flood.

And what a week it was! The streets, all unpaved, were simply masses of mud, and we merely proceeded from one pub to another to meet each other, chatting, drinking, playing whist, and dancing all the time.

We chaffed one man who had rather a commanding manner, and we called him the "Great I Am."

On one occasion a man came up to me and said, "Feel my muscle."

He certainly had a big arm, and I began to try an old joke that we used to play on men who fancied their big limbs. Carefully done, we could get a man to strip, admiring him limb by limb, but before I had more than got this man's shirt off to see this wonderful arm, up comes the "Great I Am".

"You must not show your arm here," he said, so I turned my attention to him.

"My word, what an arm!"

Up went the shirt.

"Yes," he said, "I do dumb-bells every morning."

I flattered him, and without any trouble he rolled up his trousers and backed his calf against any calf in the room. It was quite a good calf, but singularly free from hair. Up comes my old sheep-selling joker.

"Oh, what a calf!" he cries. "Take it home and shave it."

We then played tennis and all were pulling "I Am's" leg. He said to one of us:

"You may be the 'Great I Am' of Toowoomba, but you are not the 'Great I Am' here." He had no idea that was his name.

My son, aged three, came up on a man's shoulders at this moment, calling out:

"Look where 'I Am' is." The two coincident uses of the "I Am" were irresistibly funny.

When the flood waters abated we crossed the river with three feet of water running over the crossing. The water came just into the bottoms of the buggies. It was a very imposing sight, over fifty vehicles all crossing in single file a strong stream three feet high and about a mile wide.

That night we played whist. The night before we had played without the ace of spades and had only missed it after several games. We played who would get the most tricks for a sovereign. My partner was the President of the Queensland Whist Club. I trumped the second last trick, and took the last trick with the last club, and we just got the odd and the sovereign. My partner then suggested we should stop, as he said I had trumped a club and then led one, and so won both tricks.

I once knew of twenty-three inches of rain falling in Rockhampton in twenty-four hours. My brother Fred went out twice in a hansom, and with the window closed he got wet through both times. But in Brisbane thirty-nine inches fell in twenty-four hours and the flood was terrific. A naval ship was washed into the Brisbane gardens. I passed through Brisbane a few days after and saw the ship in the gardens. Curiously enough, a smaller flood came and floated the ship back.

The town was flooded and some of the lower parts were deep in the water. The offices of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Corporation were flooded, and De Little, a fine swimmer [F.A. De Little, Queensland Amateur Swimming Association. – P.M.], dived in, opened a safe under water, and saved some important books.

I can remember rowing about the streets of Rockhampton after a flood.

My station suffered severely from bush fires lit by flashes of lightning in dry thunderstorms.

One of the weirdest things noticeable during the dry thunderstorms was the smell of brimstone that accompanied them. The lightning, attracted by the iron-stone that was in the ground, fired the grass, and Beaconsfield, my station, was the worst place for these bush fires, the iron-stone showing out of the ground in many places.

On one occasion I counted fourteen fires lit by the lightning and all blazing fiercely. It looked as if the whole run would be swept by fire and I would be ruined, when it started to rain.

Putting out bush fires is the most dreadful work. It means toiling all night beating at the flames, and one gets into such a state with the heat, smoke, and exhaustion that one merely goes on mechanically. I don’t think anything is to be compared with working at a bush fire.

I remember once I was riding between two fires burning steadily when all of a sudden my horse bolted, luckily. I say luckily because suddenly the fires seemed to rush together and we were saved by the bolt. I got back with my overseer’s horse I was

leading, and found him riding off sitting behind another man. They saw the flames meeting and thought I was burnt, and such was their mental exhaustion that it did not seem to matter.

While riding in these dry storms one had to take obvious risks. I met several men who had had electric shocks from lightning, and on the run there were the graves of several men who had been killed by lightning.

The horse-boy set out for a twenty-mile ride to a camp one evening. Soon after starting he saw two horses killed beside him by lightning. He dismounted, took off his stirrup irons, hid them in the grass, and went on. I thought this very plucky; probably I myself would have gone back to the house.

On a neighbouring station three men were once riding in a thunderstorm on a dark night. There was a blinding flash of light. The two outside men rode on to the gate, and when they got there, they discovered that the middle man was missing. They found him dead on the road where the flash had occurred.

In those storms the darkness becomes uncanny; possibly the flashes accentuate it by their blinding effect.

In one of those storms with its uncanny darkness, when I was half a mile from home about ten o'clock at night, after having been in the saddle since six a.m., my horse stumbled. Though I could not see it or the ground, I knew it was coming down. As my hands struck the ground I ran forward on them, and then to my horror, I felt my foot was caught in the stirrup. Then, thump, and my horse was on me. What a weight! It was dreadful.

At the moment of impact, I felt I was crushed to death. I said aloud in an ordinary voice: "Crushed, by God!" It was neither an exclamation of fear nor irreverence; it was simply the statement of a plain fact, which, strangely enough, did not really even interest me. I felt sure the weight would kill me, and I accepted death as a fatalist. On four other occasions I have been face to face with, and within an instant of, death. On each occasion the first sensation was that of horror, then oblivion, or merely a fatalistic acceptance of the situation.

One of those occasions was when my bicycle skidded in front of a tram in Melbourne, and I fell, half on the line and half off. I instantly visualised myself being cut in two as the tram passed over me. Luckily, the iron guard in front of the tram saved me, and I escaped with a circular black bruise fully a foot in diameter. The horror during the instant of falling was very acute, but all became a blank before I reached the ground.

There have been frequent cases of men perishing from thirst. They wander off the track and get lost in the bush. Why they wander off is a mystery. The strangest thing is they always take off all their clothes and perish naked.

The manager of a neighbouring station told me on one occasion he had the greatest difficulty in keeping on the track. He started off on the previous morning for a long ride, and at night when he struck a boundary rider's camp, he found it deserted, and this left him fifty miles from food. During his ride the next day, he had an almost irresistible inclination to wander off and perish, and he told me it took him all his time to maintain his self-control.

He arrived about sundown at another boundary rider's camp.

"Good evening, Mr. C. Would you like some supper?"

Mr. C. replied, "I don't know, Bill, what have you got?"

Bill was astonished, and asked him, "When did you have your last meal?"

Bill was more astonished when he heard the reply, "Yesterday morning." That was thirty-six hours before. Mr. C. said he felt very fastidious about what he would have to eat.

My overseer told me a similar story about a long fast. When he was a boy, he came on the tracks of some cattle that had been lost. He tracked them until he found them and drove them home, a long job. He was three days without anything to eat, and after the first twenty-four hours, he had no sensation of hunger at all. In fact, his opinion was that the sensation called hunger is merely the pangs of indigestion.

About this time a man and boy got lost in the bush and were eleven days without food. When they were found at last, the man was in a very emaciated condition, but the boy was quite strong and much less affected by the long fast than the man.

I remember one day the shearers' cook telling me that his offsider (the man working with him) had not touched food for a week. I took him up to the house and told him to go into town with the wagon that was going the next day. He went to sleep with the men that night, but was missing in the morning. He had gone wild and wandered up the bush.

The country all round was open downs with very little timber, so he ought to have been found very easily. I got the shearers and roustabouts and all hands, about ninety in all, out on horses, and we spent the day searching for him. We ran up the creeks where the timber was, and spread over the downs, and scoured the country for twenty miles round, but never a sign could we find. The strange thing was that we could not pick up a track, although it was loose soil and every footmark would show, and as no one ever moved on foot except to go from the house to the stock yard, any footmark would be his. We had plenty of good trackers for white men, though my overseer, himself a good tracker, told me that a black fellow could track at a gallop where a good white tracker would go at a walk. Black fellows could read something from every bent blade of grass. They could tell the north, south, east, and west from the leaves on the trees – not that

they would call the directions by the terms of the compass. The leaves of the trees grew somewhat longer in one direction, at least so they said. I could see no difference. Anyway, it is generally known the Australian trees throw very little shade.

An expert could write a very interesting chapter on trackers and tracking. I will give one instance and then return to the lost wild man.

I was driving along the road (or bush track, as, of course, these roads were merely tracks on the soil of the country) from the local township to the woolshed. It was a dry time, and the road was about three inches deep in dry dust. It was a mass of horses' hoof-marks, as horses had been ridden and driven to and fro for months, making thousands of tracks.

We were about nine miles from the township, when all of a sudden the horse-boy, a young half-caste, who was sitting beside me, said:

"Stop, that man been walking in front of us has gone off the track."

I had not seen any man walking ahead of us, and we could see miles ahead at times. However, I stopped, and he got out and went back and picked up the tracks. He branched off to the right and went to some timber that was in the bed of the creek. On his return he said:

"All right, he camp along of water."

On questioning him, he told me he had seen the tracks and knew a man had started out for the woolshed some hours ahead of us, and directly the tracks ceased, he noticed it. There was no foot track visible to me amongst the conglomeration of horses' tracks. How the yellow boy had noticed the footmarks goodness only knows.

Very occasionally a man who had got "on the spree" would walk out in the blazing heat after having spent all his money and sold his horse for drink, and such a man might wander up the bush and perish. That was what was in the boy's mind, though I should have said he had never even looked at the tracks as we went along. He was a very interesting boy to talk to, and used to chat away all the time, apparently never looking at the track.

He told a lady many interesting things as he drove her to the house once, and added:

"If you were a man I could tell you more things."

He told me more things, and they were quite interesting, but, of course, unprintable in our state of false decency. He was convinced "yellow boy best," and "White man most immoral, black man very moral."

His description of their marriage ceremony was interesting. “If black boy want marry girl, he chase her. If he catch her, he knock her down (first intention of who was to be boss).” The girl would be as fleet of foot as the boy, and probably only got caught by the boy she wanted to marry. Then he would take her to his mia-mia (a hut built of boughs), and if he kept her there for twenty-four hours, they were married. Then he would issue from his mia-mia with a strap or rope round his waist, and she would appear holding on to it, an indication that he was to drag her through life.

Asked if there were any such thing as another man making love to her, he said, “Never.” But after one or two moons (probably meaning that when there were indications that he was to become a father) he would lend her out by night to his best friends. “Black man very moral.”

To return to the lost man, we gave up the search after a day, and nothing more was heard of him for some time.

There was a surveyor’s camp in the outside country, and about a month afterwards my overseer struck this camp, and in the course of conversation they told him that the missing man had turned up on foot, but on being asked to have something to eat, he had refused.

He turned up at that camp exactly a fortnight after he had left the homestead, and looked quite strong. He must then have been at least twenty-one days without food, as the shearers’ cook had originally told me that he had noticed the man had not had anything to eat for a week. Some time afterwards his skeleton was found by a boundary rider against a boundary fence.

That boundary rider was a character, a somewhat aristocratic fellow, with a huge black beard. He came from the neighbouring station to me, and one wondered how he had wandered into the back blocks of Australia. Was it drink? (I think in his case it very probably was.) Was it a woman? Was it forgery? These various reasons explained the presence of many of the population there.

When he asked me, would I cash the neighbouring station’s cheque as he thought their credit was bad, I wondered. When giving evidence at the inquest on the skeleton he had found, he said it was the skeleton of a young man. On the judge asking him how he knew, he replied, “By his mouth; he had a sound mouth.”

Once he mounted a horse which rounded his back to start bucking.

“Wait! wait! wait!” He called out. “I’ll get off.”

The horse didn’t wait and he came off.

CHAPTER XI

STORIES OF THE BUSH

My overseer was a real bushman; he had not been into town for thirteen years. He got his younger brother to come up as overseer when I made him manager. In the course of conversation, it came out that the elder brother thought he was five years younger than he was. So much for the bushman's notice of the passage of time.

The only occasion on which he had to think of his age was when he married; he was five years out when he made a shot at it. We were very real friends. There has been no man for whom I have had a greater admiration. He lived for his work, and marriage was comparatively an episode. I drove in to the local township to the marriage, and arrived rather late. He told me afterwards that he felt all at sea till I arrived, and instantly all seemed right.

He secured an exceptionally good wife, but he was so wrapped up in his work – in the saddle daily from sunrise to sunset – that his wife told me he ought never to have married, and she could see no reason why he did. She was nursing her eighth baby, so I suggested that I could see eight reasons why he should be married.

His family were very interesting. The eldest boy promised to be a great bushman. They had a governess and she was teaching them religion. One day I was driving with the eldest boy, and we still had thirty miles to go and night was coming on. I had got directions from the manager of a neighbouring station as to the way. We came to two tracks of equal size, and it was doubtful which was the right one. One led to a boundary rider's hut, no doubt, and the other to my destination. Of course the manager never mentioned anything about taking the right or the left turning. It was a way they had in the bush. If one asked the way, ninety times out of a hundred the answer was, "Keep straight on," and very likely one would come to two roads branching at right angles.

I told the boy that I was afraid I had taken the wrong road, and that we might be benighted on the road. The boy was quiet for a time and then said:

"We are on the right road, Mr. Fairbairn. I've just asked God."

The eldest girl was a fat, round little lump, and answered to the name of Booboo. One day she startled the Sunday School by asking:

"Has God a mother?"

The governess, being a Roman Catholic, said yes.

The next question showed what one of her mother's occupations was. She asked:

"Does she peel the potatoes?"

Bush children learn many things naturally that are hidden from town children. I remember driving with the eldest boy one day, and he asked me to pull up. He stood and looked at a mare grazing close by, and said, “Yes, she is going to have a foal,” and he told me quite naturally why he thought so. Bush boys take these acts as natural, and there is no fear of that sexual degeneracy that comes to boys who find out these facts from dissolute companions in towns.

I have mentioned the hordes of wallaby that had come and eaten all the grass. It is quite impossible to give any idea of the numbers of the wallaby in these hordes. The man who erected the wire-netting fence, Sam, and his brother Tom, who perished in the bush, told me that hundreds of the wallaby would run into the fence daily and kill themselves whilst the men were constructing it. There must have been some millions of the beasts on the station that was wire-netted. There was feed for 100,000 sheep for twelve months when the pests arrived, and, in a few weeks, there was not a blade of grass, and the neighbouring runs were similarly devastated.

A plague of rats once came in the same way. They were marsupials like the kangaroo and wallaby, that is, they carried their babies in a pouch. These rats were not the kangaroo rat, but were similar in size to the ordinary rat. We never saw one by day, although we saw myriads of scratchings. They were always travelling north, never stopping. A cat was kept in every station store to keep down the mice, and so keep away snakes that came after mice. On my station and the neighbouring station both the cats used to catch, kill, and bring in rats nightly. One cat used to average seventeen and the other twenty-seven a night. As the rats did not come near the house, and as wild rats would be hard to catch, there must have been untold numbers.

It does not follow that the seventeen and twenty-seven were all that were killed. These were stacked in heaps nightly.

These rats were travelling over an area more than 100 miles wide and goodness knows what depth. One of my brothers told me he was out riding once, and apparently was on the tail of the horde, because he counted over a hundred weak and sick cats in an hour. Evidently these cats were chasing the rats, and even the cats must have been very numerous if one could see a hundred sick ones dropping behind; it looked as if they were too weak to keep up. The horde was possibly occupying over 100 miles by over 100 miles, or over 10,000 square miles. Judging by the numbers of rats caught by cats in our store and the innumerable scratchings, there must have been many millions of rats.

Where did they come from, and where did they and the wallaby go to? Nobody knew. It seems to me the same with the dingoes. They are the shyest of wild dogs and are only seen when starving. The only one that I ever saw was in the year 1879, and he followed the buggy at a distance for miles. One read in the paper recently of 1,800 dingoes being destroyed on one property. This looks as if some one were able to catch them at last.

Trapping the dingo used to be very difficult and only a very few ever acquired the art. The trapper dare not touch the poisoned bait with his hands, for no dingo, however hungry, would touch the most tempting morsel of meat if there was the slightest human smell about it. Apparently smell is the universal warner of danger, not only to animals, but also to human beings, especially in the wild state. A pheasant or partridge, sitting hard before hatching its eggs, gives off no scent and will be passed by the fox, a provision of nature to allow the eggs to hatch; and does not a fox give off a very strong smell? That is also a protection to the birds upon which he preys.

On my first visit to Queensland there was a large camp of blacks on the station. We sometimes had to cross a path that the blacks used to walk along from their camp to the killing yard, and we could smell them very plainly if they had passed in the morning. They told us they could smell us and we had a different scent from them.

Apparently, reasoning from the sitting pheasant having no scent, scent is only given off by movement.

Not only is scent given to locate one's enemies, or for wild animals to find their food, and for the smaller animals to protect themselves, but also the reproduction of the different animal species is governed by scent. In animals, the female at certain times gives off a scent that attracts the male. I have been told that the camel varies the order of sex and the male attracts the female. Again, one only tastes by smell. Take castor oil and hold your breath and you won't taste till you breathe.

Not only will a dingo fight shy of a bait with the slightest scent of a human hand on it, but a merino ewe will not take readily to its lamb after the lamb has been handled by a human hand. The lamb will follow its mother, but the mother fights shy of the lamb and for a time refuses to let it get any milk.

But nature again steps in as time goes on; more milk is made, and the supply pinches the ewe, and the ewe allows the lamb to drink.

On several occasions I have mentioned my overseer Anderson, who later became my manager. He was of all the white men I have met the one nearest to nature. He was wonderfully in touch with all live stock. When the selectors came into our district and took up the country on our sheep runs, they all came to him for advice as to what to do with their farms. Frequently, owing to floods washing the fencing down, these selectors' sheep would get boxed, that is, mixed with other sheep. Anderson would go and draft the sheep off and separate them. It required an expert, because sometimes there would be four or five lots mixed.

This drafting process is worth description. The sheep would be put into a large receiving yard, and from there they would be run in to fill smaller yards, till they came to a V-shaped forcing yard. Then came a race, and the drafting gate at the far end of it. The race was about six yards long.

The man engaged in drafting stood at the gate at the head of the race. The sheep would naturally refuse to come to him down the race, where they could go only one at a time, and the art of drafting was to keep the sheep moving up to the gate. A man with a long stick stood outside half-way up the race, and if a sheep looked like stopping, he gave it a prod. But the man at the gate had to keep them running through and not blocking them, and this was a fine art. The knack was to make the sheep's desire to follow the one ahead greater than his wish to stop when seeing the man at the gate. Sheep have a natural instinct to race after the one in front, and one had to encourage this instinct in keeping them moving. If a man intruded and stopped one, the lot would stop and turn round. Men were stationed in different yards and by running through the sheep away from the gate they would make the sheep dash away from them towards the gate. As soon as a man arrived at the far end, he would go forward, outside, and come in and work back through the sheep. It was fine team work.

Drafting is done by the ear-mark, and one had to pick this out several sheep ahead whilst one was swinging the gate for the sheep to run through to their right receiving yard. Anderson drafted the sheep five different ways if necessary.

To the uninitiated, picking out the ear-mark appears to be a wonderful art. An ear-mark looked to me like an ear with a cut and a scab, and all looked much alike. I never went into the yard to do the drafting, but I used to mark the lambs, and all the marks put into the ears were clean-cut, but they grew to look quite different.

In those days we had to register an ear-mark, marking the ewe lamb on one ear and the wether on the other. My ear-mark was a notch, that is, a square piece cut out of the ear. This was varied for four years – a single notch on the front of the ear the first year, the back of the ear the second year, a double notch the third and fourth years, and then back to the single, because most, if not all, had died or been sold to the butcher or boiled down for tallow by the end of the fourth year.

Before the days of compulsory ear-mark registration, one could use any mark. On the boundary of one of my father's sheep runs, there was a neighbour who used to steal our sheep and cut the ear clean off. So my father's manager slit the ear right down as a protection, and when the neighbour was shearing, the manager went over to claim any stray sheep, as was the custom. He asked the neighbour what was his ear-mark.

"Just cut the ear off," was the reply.

"Anything else?"

"No."

"Well, my mark is a slit, and this one has a slit on the ear you have cut off, and this one" – and so on. Thus he reclaimed hundreds of sheep.

This neighbour had written to my father saying that my father's sheep had got through the fence into his country and had done a lot of damage, which was quite untrue, and asked for £1,000 compensation. My father wrote to his manager instructing him to pay. The manager was very indignant and refused, because in reality this man had put his sheep through on to my father's run to eat his grass, knowing he would get them back, and any of my father's sheep that strayed through had their ears cut off; he also took off their wool and then sold them. It was very necessary in the early days to keep a sharp look-out on one's stock.

As I have said, Anderson used to draft five different ways. This meant five V shaped delivery yards, and he had to pick out the ear-marks and swing the gates to let each sheep run through into its right yard. He had also to be selecting several more while he opened the right gate for each sheep, and they were being forced up to him at a run. He would have the two outside gates to take the smallest number of sheep, the middle gate the largest number, and the other two gates received the next biggest lots.

A good drafting team and a good man at the gate would keep the sheep galloping up and forcing the ones ahead onwards. There was a good deal of knack in it, and more dust. Frequently one could not see sheep for dust.

The simplest form of drafting was to have only one gate and two receiving yards. But even this wasn't easy. My first drafting job was weaning the lambs, putting the lambs on one side and the ewes on the other. Up came the first ewe, then her lamb. I opened the gate to let the ewe through, but before I could get it swung across for the lamb to run to the other side, the lamb had slipped through also. The manager called out to me:

"You have got fifty per cent. right."

Anderson could show the selectors and others how to do all sorts of jobs. I shall never forget his lesson on how to "shift muck", with a long-handled shovel. We were throwing earth into a dray high above us. It was done with a knack, he said, and he showed me how, adding that it was not done by brute force like rowing and other sports. This to me, who fancied my "knack" at all games! I had been in Inter-State, if not International, class at football, cricket, rowing, and running whilst still a schoolboy, so my "knack" must have been pretty good.

One evening the woman who, with her husband, did the work in the kitchen, came running in to me saying Anderson had been injured. I found that he had been thrown from his horse and had broken his leg. It was a case of driving him fifty miles to a doctor, to a township called Aramac. This sounds like a native name, but it was really so-called because there was a big tree against a water-hole, and the initials "R. A. Mac" were cut on the tree, and a bush township had sprung up round this hole.

I laid Anderson down in the buggy between my legs, as he could not sit up, and there wasn't much room. We changed horses after twenty miles. He was in terrible pain; in

fact, he was half delirious, for he said to me, “I am glad you are driving me, I could not have stuck it with anyone else,” and we never spoke sentimentally in the bush.

We drove on into the night. It got pitch dark, and one had no lights by which to see the road. The road was only a seldom-used bush track, hard enough to see in the daytime. One had to trust to the horses to keep on it on those dark nights.

I drove on in the dark, straining my eyes for the gate, which was very difficult to see. One might easily run into it, because it was merely six wires stretched across the road. As I had borrowed the horses, I did not know what they would do if we ran into the gate, and I was not anxious to find out, especially with a crippled man in the buggy. Anderson saw me peering into the dark looking for the gate, and he exhibited a wonderful feat in bushmanship.

The country was open, rolling downs, the rolls about half a mile long. The rise and fall would be about twenty or thirty feet.

“The gate is over the next rise,” he said, so there was another half-mile before I need worry about the gate.

There must have been eight or ten rolls in the paddock, and how he could remember the number at any time, let alone distinguish them in the dark while lying on his back gazing up to heaven, was a queer revelation of bushcraft. The grades up and down were very slight, so one would have thought it impossible for him to tell the difference. He could see nothing, he was half delirious, and had seldom been along that track. But he was right.

We arrived in the township at eleven o’clock. The doctor was in bed and did not trouble to get up. He simply said:

“Take him round to the hotel and I’ll attend to him in the morning.” It sounded very cruel, but possibly he had had too much drink to attend to a patient.

On another occasion Anderson gave me an even more wonderfully striking example of his bush lore.

I had lent a horse to one of the men working for a friend of mine. The horse was called 201, being named from his number. He had a long tail sweeping the ground. (Occasionally a horse would be missing for some time, having got away into an outlying paddock, and his tail would keep on growing. Horses at work always got their tails trimmed.)

I drove my friend back home with me after giving the horse to his man Jack to return. On the following day, Anderson, my friend, and I were standing outside the homestead when we saw a horseman appear on the horizon about three miles away.

My friend and I agreed that it was Jack on 201, as Jack was the only man likely to be on that road, and the horse's tail was sweeping the ground, a very unusual thing. Anderson surprised us by saying that it was not 201. As the man came nearer we saw that it was Jack, and my friend and I became more and more certain that it was my horse.

When he arrived I walked up to Jack and was quite convinced that the horse was 201. But when I looked for the number on his neck, it was not there. I told Jack it was not my horse. He said he had stopped at a pub for a feed, and had taken the saddle and bridle off his horse and let him go in the yard, where there were a dozen other horses. When he came to catch his horse after the meal, the horse he caught was the only one with a long tail in the yard and he took him. So the owner of this horse had taken 201 by mistake.

The owner, Jack, my friend, and I mistook the horse when close to him, but Anderson knew that it was not the one we thought at a distance of three miles. I asked Anderson how he knew it was not 201, and he said by his walk. The strange part of it was that bush horses walk very much alike, and I doubt if one man in a thousand could have seen any difference between the walk of that horse and any ordinary bush horse.

Anderson was also especially good at naming horses, and it was very necessary to name them, because there were about 200 horses on the station. The best name he ever gave a horse was given to one that had a walk of its own. It had a short, choppy stride, and gave the feeling it was going fast, but it got over the ground exceptionally slowly. He named this one by its brand also. Its brand was T.D.I., and Anderson named it Tedious.

When I was first in the bush a man said to me, "Here comes So-and-so." I wondered how he could tell at a distance of a couple of miles, but similar incidents occurred frequently and I soon began to get this bushcraft myself.

Anderson gave another exhibition of his bushcraft one day while we were riding together.

"Look at those horses," I said, "they must be five miles away or more." "But they are not horses," he replied, "they are cattle."

"How can you tell that?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "there are two or three hundred head, and not one has its head up. Now if they were horses, some would be sure to put their heads up."

His knowledge of sheep was wonderful. He said to me:

"If I am in charge of travelling sheep I pick out several in different parts of each flock with some peculiarities, such as a broken horn, a black patch, et cetera, and if I see

these, I feel sure all the sheep are there, *for every sheep takes the same position in every mob every day*."

I never tried to verify that, but I'll bet it's right, and I wonder how many white men know it. Very few; but I feel sure every black who has worked with sheep knows it.

On one occasion I sent Anderson into the township of Barcaldine to truck some sheep. Barcaldine township was part of one of my father's sheep runs. The Government resumed from the sheep run 100 square miles to form a reserve when the railway eventually extended that far. This was the first mob of sheep to be trucked on that railway, and so I rode in to see the trucking started. The local agent of the freezing works, to which the sheep were going, counted the sheep with Anderson.

On arriving in the town the first thing I heard was that "Dutchy" was drunk, and had gone to live with the washer-woman.

"Dutchy" was cooking for the men with the sheep, and his abandoning the cooking was a blow. Dutchy heard I was in town and came to ask me for money. He had a legal right to it, but as, of course, he would only spend it on drink, I temporised.

"You're drunk, Dutchy," I said. "Come to me when you are sober."

"Drunk, am I?" he said. "I'll bet you all the money I've got I can walk a straight line."

"How much have you got?"

"Eleven quid," he said.

So I bet him eleven quid he could not walk ten yards along the line between the floor-boards.

He got to the starting-point and looked along, and realizing that he could not do it, he said, "It's too far to walk for a dirty eleven quid." So the bet was off, but he was thwarted in his attempt to get more money.

Anderson told me the local agent could not count sheep, but was always trying to sneak one here and one there in the count.

"I can do him for as many as I like," he said.

"Don't do him," I replied, "but see that there is a fair count."

Having seen that everything was all right, I rode away home, a distance of fifty miles.

Anderson finished trucking the sheep and returned. He told me he got the better of the local agent for a hundred sheep. He said the man was so irritating that he could not help

it. He also said he thought the trucks ought to be locked, but they weren't. Then the manager of the freezing works wrote to me and told me there were a hundred sheep short and asked me if I would explain it. I wrote back that "his agent could not count sheep against a sheep man," and pointed out that the doors of the trucks were not locked. In my opinion the explanation might be found in either statement, as the train stopped at many stations.

The doors were henceforth always locked, and an efficient counter put on. Receiving payment for a hundred sheep that were not there was a cheap commission for the advice given, which no doubt saved the freezing company many pounds.

Anderson was also good at doctoring stock, but not so good at taking medicine himself. One evening he complained of a bad pain, and on examining the cause, I found he had taken somebody's Pink Pills for Pale People, as the advertisement ran. He wanted to get well quickly, and as the first dose had no effect, he swallowed the whole box.

One winter Anderson fell ill. I invited him to come to Melbourne for a change, at a time when the present King [George V] was in Australia. Anderson was very loath to go, and wired several times en route, wanting to return to the sheep, but I wired that he must come on. He arrived at night, and the next morning we rode on the dummy of a tram along the St. Kilda road into Melbourne. This road, three chains wide, is one of the finest entries into a city one could imagine, and our present King was to make his entry to Melbourne along it. Four rows of trees made two roads on the sides and a bigger one in the centre. Fresh English grass had been planted, and flowering oleander bushes, et cetera, with water playing on them. The road was one long circular bend, and a bridge over the Yarra River at the entrance to the town was resplendent with triumphal arches bedecked with flags for the coming royal procession.

As the triumphal arches burst into sight, I said to Anderson:

"What do you think of this road?"

"There is a nice picking for a travelling mob of sheep," he replied.

That was all he saw. Whereas all Victoria was amazed at the beauties of this road and bridge, he, perfect child of nature, only wished that the fresh young grass could be eaten by a weary, drought-stricken mob of sheep.

I persuaded Anderson to come into Longreach, the local town, to attend a Pastoralists' meeting when the big shearers' strike was on. He got out of bed at daybreak next morning, and shortly afterwards he came back in great excitement. He began:

"Of all the ——y towns I've ever been in, this is the ——est."

"What's up now?" I said.

As this was his first visit to a town for thirteen years, I did not take much notice of his criticism of that town.

“Well,” he said, “I’ve been all round the town and it’s past six o’clock, and the sun has risen, and not a single bank opened yet!”

There was a bushman’s idea of the time banks should be opened, and he was quite right. Civilization and large towns lead to people staying up late and getting up late. Now, if all people got to their offices at 6 o’clock, they could close at 2:30, and the population would get several hours’ recreation in the open air daily. To accomplish this and to obviate the necessity of changing the clock, let all the electric light and gas be shut off at 9 p.m., and people would be ready to get up early, and it would only want a week of no light at night to get the nation back to early hours, with immense advantage to their health and to the nation’s prosperity.

Once, on looking through the books, I found that no cheque had been paid to a carrier for carting wool, so I told Anderson.

“Oh yes, he was paid,” said Anderson, and produced the receipt.

On asking how he was paid, since there was no cheque, Anderson could not understand it. He must have paid him out of his private cheque book. He would never have discovered this if I had not found it out, and so he would have lost the money.

Frequently Anderson used to come to me and tell me he had broken all his pipes and had given up smoking for a year. But a couple of days afterwards, he would be seen with a new pipe. I would say, “The year’s up?”

“Yes, I could not stick it any longer.”

I smoked for a couple of years, and he and I used to buy cigars, 1,000 at a time apiece. We would smoke them and throw the butts away. On one occasion, after we had smoked out our supply, I saw Anderson with a cigar butt in his pipe. On inquiry I found that he had picked up the butt of a cigar that had been thrown away, and was smoking it. I then did likewise.

I was smoking all day. One day Anderson came into the station and we talked about the affairs of the run, where we would put the ewes to lamb, et cetera. He cut up some tobacco and filled a pipe, and I did the same, looking forward in anticipation to the smoke. He put his pipe in his mouth and lit it, and I was about to do the same, when I found I was smoking all the time and did not know it. I stopped smoking on account of this incident.

The worst coach drive I ever took was from Longreach to Winton, 120 miles – 80 miles the first day and 40 miles the second. The ground was drying from rain, and was in

good going form. I started at 4 a.m. on my bicycle with the coach. There was a slight leading breeze which increased all day and the track was in perfect order.

I bicycled away from the coach and got to the breakfast pub, and started chatting to the publican. The neighbouring station, Maneroo, had recently finished shearing 200,000 sheep and all hands used to make for the pub. Here they would knock down their cheques, and the publican used to clear hundreds of pounds in a fortnight.

Well, the shearers had been instructed by the union not to drink, but to bank their money, and the publican told me not only did none of them drink, but they robbed the till.

After chatting to him for some time I said:

“Where is that coach?”

“Oh,” he said, “it won’t be here for an hour yet!”

So I breakfasted and went on. The track was perfect and the wind leading and getting up and blowing up clouds. I got to within a mile of the coach’s destination by two o’clock, when down came the rain, and I had to walk in, carrying the cycle in the mud, and wait for the coach, which turned up as usual at 11 p.m.

Had I known how good were the track and the wind, and had I gone straight on without stopping at the pub in the morning, I would have made a great record for that part of the world. I could easily have got into Winton, 120 miles from Longreach, by one o’clock. The coach reached its breakfast stage at 9 a.m. and I was two hours before them, going easy. If I had gone all out, I could have left there at 7 a.m., and fifteen miles an hour with the wind there was would have been child’s play.

Had I gone on, goodness knows what would have become of the passengers in that coach.

On the following morning we started at 4 a.m., and what a dreadful day that was! After the rain the ground was very heavy, the wheels got clogged with mud, and the horses knocked up. We reached our breakfast stage at 10 a.m., taking six hours to do eighteen miles I stuffed my pockets full of biscuits and I had a flask of whisky. We put in fresh horses, three in the lead and two in the wheel. The groom who put the horses in was a wild bush boy, very cranky and unbroken. He had never seen a town and, with the glorious conceit of ignorance, thought he knew more than anyone. I was sitting by the driver, and next to me was a policeman in plain clothes on a secret job. The policeman made a very nice remark apropos of the bush groom. He said:

“What he wants is to be taken into town and be given the sight of a train. That would steady him.”

Jimmy, the driver, ought to have made the groom bring on spare horses for a change, considering the heavy going, but Jimmy was a sick man. We had eighteen miles to go, and it took us till 11 p.m. to do it. We did not average a mile and a half an hour, and any minute we might stick altogether, without food and without drink, in mud in which one could not walk five miles without knocking up.

When one was walking, the mud would collect on one's boots and keep growing until there was half a hundredweight on each boot. Then one would find the mud stick to the ground, and the boot would come out clear, and the leg fly past one, such was the amount of force one had to put into each stride. Similarly, the wheels clogged into big discs of mud and made the coach very heavy. The three leaders would sway from side to side, and the pole, a swinging one which was hanging low, would cut the legs from under one of the wheelers, and the horse would turn clean on to its back on the wrong side of the pole. Then I had to get down and unloose the traces and pole straps, which were drawn very tight, and get the horse out and harness it again, and off we would go at a lumbering jog. I was kept at this work all day, and on two or three occasions both horses toppled over, each on its back on the wrong side of the pole, which Euclid would have thought impossible.

This was a most extraordinary sight. The horses had nothing but winkers, collars, and traces on. The mud was awful. The horses and harness were smothered in it, and so was I.

We got to the town boundary gate at seven o'clock. It was just getting dark, and we had four miles to go. Jimmy the driver asked me to drive because he was knocked up. So I took the reins and whip. The whip was encased in mud, and it felt a hundredweight. How poor little Jimmy could have wielded it so long I don't know.

After driving from the box seat for a short time I told Jimmy I would get down and drive on foot, and gave him the reins. It was pitch dark and I could not see the horses. So I got out and walked alongside. I urged the horses with whip and voice. As I struck the offside leader, he would pull and sway away from me, and as I urged the others with whip and voice, they swayed and swung back. By freely using the whip, and shouting, I got them into a jog, and with my feet clogged in the mud, it took me all my time to keep up with them, and the horses swinging back, struck me and knocked me over. I got up and chased them, yelling and swearing to keep them going, but they dropped back into a walk, and I caught up and urged, them into a jog again.

But I wasn't going to be knocked over again. After using the whip freely and getting the horses into a jog trot, I stuck the butt end out, feeling for them on the rebound, and so saved getting knocked down again. Of course, this was terribly arduous work, and as there were several passengers, I made them get out and walk, and urged the horses on again. We outdistanced the passengers, so I stopped and waited for them. One old man took a long time, so I put him back in the coach. I urged the others to keep up if possible, because at any time the horses stopped, they might not start again. Although there was only another mile or so to go, if we had to walk, we would surely miss the

road, because as everything was a mass of mud, it was only the horses' instinct that kept us on it.

We got to the bore-drain, a stream a few feet wide. Jimmy called out to me, "Don't go into the drain," and I didn't. But I would have, if Jimmy had not warned me.

I put the passengers back into the coach and drove over it. The water in these bore-drains was very hot. A dog had stepped into this one half a mile from the bore and was killed instantly by the heat of the water. I should have lost both my feet if Jimmy had not called out. I was too weary to think. Knocked up as I was, the shock would probably have killed me.

We arrived at Winton at 11 p.m., the last four miles having taken us four hours, the hardest four hours' work I ever did. I washed and changed and came down to the dining-room, where some of the passengers were, including an old lady. I hardly expected that she would speak to me, because my language was very strenuous while driving the horses, so I was pleased to hear her say:

"We've got to thank you, Mr. Fairbairn, for getting here to-night."

Poor Jimmy, the driver, committed suicide within a year of this trip. On one occasion when I travelled with him, he told me of many horrors of coach-driving. Amongst others the following:

Under the mail contract with the Government the driver had to take any passenger, and occasionally Jimmy had to take a sick passenger that he knew would never get to the end of the journey alive. His worst drive was when, all alone, he got a passenger very ill and had to drive him all that day and the next. Jimmy had to get down and open the gates, drive through them, shut them, and drive on. The coach arrived at its night's destination at 11 p.m. and was away at 4 a.m., and on again through the next day. Jimmy told me he dared not look in to see if his passenger was alive, either at the gates or at night. He just left him there, and delivered the corpse to the police on arriving at his destination. He did not know when he died, and, as he expressed it, he was simply driving away from him the whole time.

I remember once calling at a camp where they were well-boring. The water was flowing and its temperature was 195°. They had no meat, so they killed a couple of fowls in my honour, and the cook just drew them through the heated water and the feathers came off. Another couple of turns and they were boiled.

Poor old cook! He went to the mail to get his post, which consisted of a bottle or two of whisky. When he returned he got drunk, and he went into the water in a sitting position and made some rump steak of himself.

The other men had all gone because the boring was finished. He was left to mind the tools, et cetera, until they returned, which would be when they were sober enough and

poor enough, so he was all alone. Luckily a boundary rider turned up and carried him to bed and looked after him, or he would have died.

On a station, the work of the house was usually done by a married couple. For some years I had one of the best. As a rule, one or other of the married couple was a loafer, but both husband and wife in this case were good workers. The little woman was four feet seven inches high, but did not look even so tall. The woman did all the housework, and the man killed the sheep, milked the cows, and helped with the cooking. This man, Sam Tart, was a Yorkshireman, very silent, but a very good worker. I remember going out to Sam to say that a lamb-marking camp of fourteen hands would be in to supper. I had given him very little notice, and later I went back to see how he was getting on. He was rolling out some flour and water made into paste, three feet wide, six feet long and half an inch thick. All he said was:

“This is the stuff they like. None of your fancy pastry, but stuff that will stick to their ribs.”

Sam used to read the papers, and once, in the midst of a fearful drought, he told me there would be a drought –

“You must wait till you see the stars shooting up before there will be a drought.”

“Well, Sam,” I said, “if the stars don’t start shooting up soon, there won’t be any sheep alive to see the drought.”

Shooting stars are very common in that dry clear sky, and I suppose Sam had read something about the stars appearing to shoot upwards when the air got very dry.

One very extraordinary atmospheric effect that we frequently saw was this. There was a neighbouring station called Bimbah (black-fellows’ lingo for fat fish). If one looked towards Bimbah early on a clear winter’s morning, one could see the house quite easily, but after the early morning it was hidden by trees. It was eleven miles away. This exceptional visibility was said to be owing to the rarefaction of the air. The ground was perfectly level, and even without the intervening trees the roll of the earth would hide it.

One day Sam’s wife came running past me, carrying my gun, saying she was going to take her life. She ran to the veranda. As I jumped up to stop her shooting herself, Sam came lumbering in, and I shouted to him to catch her, as she was going to shoot herself.

“No, she won’t,” said Sam. “Women in towns, you know,” he went on, “get together indoors and have tea-fights and clear the air. But Annie’s all alone.”

So carrying the gun was an air-clearer.

One peculiar thing that gave one a great shock when sitting all alone in a house at night was as follows. The roof of the house had been painted white with refrigerating paint, as it was called, to help to cool the house.

Occasionally on a bright moonlight night one would be startled by hideous noises of things crashing on the roof. The noises were occasioned by a flock of ducks whose water had dried up in the drought and who had mistaken the white roof for water.

It happened to me three or four times. It is impossible to describe the noise or its effect when, alone in the tense stillness of the bush, these ducks crashed on to the roof.

We used to find fish in water-holes that had been dry for months and just refilled with water by rain, and the general explanation was that birds had carried the spawn.

Another curious phenomenon which I have seen several times after rain was hundreds and hundreds of very young frogs on the roads. It looked as if there had been a shower of frogs.

Migration of birds is a very interesting study, but I heard recently that fish migrate in the same way as birds, from, say, the coast of England to America, and the lazy eel makes incredible journeys up rivers.

Now we come to the story of the Irishman who was landing in America, and was standing on a pier regretting the money spent on his passage, when he saw a man come up in a diver's dress and walk ashore. He went up to him and said:

"If I had known you were walking across, I would have walked with you."

One of the most interesting hours I ever spent was with a man at Christchurch in his bird museum; he had a wonderful knowledge of the habits of birds. I hear he has departed this life, but I hope his information and his museum have been kept.

There was a general fall of rain of eight inches all over Central Queensland, steady, heavy rain. I rode in it all day, and in the afternoon the water was two or three inches deep on the surface and running everywhere. This created huge floods in the creeks and rivers.

Insects of all sorts, mostly beetles, were washed out of their holes and on to the banks of the dams. The rush of water threatened to wash away the bank of the dam at the house, and we went down to see what could be done to it. The insects simply covered the whole of the bank, and hundreds were killed every time one put one's foot down They were there in their millions, climbing up our legs in hundreds, conspicuous on our white moleskin trousers. The store-keeper said:

"I have just trod on a death adder (our most deadly snake)."

"And look at your trousers now," I said. Not only were there hundreds of insects up the legs, but a long centipede was crawling inside, and if I had not noticed it, it would have given him an extremely nasty bite.

Anderson, resourceful as usual, sank down our six months' supply of flour, in its bags, to stop the gap the water was making. This saved the dam and did not appreciably hurt the flour, which cakes and prevents the water entering.

The first time I ever saw a snake was when I was a youngster, and was in a plantation into which my uncle had warned me not to go as it was full of snakes. I was shooting birds with a catapult, and on looking down I saw a snake between my legs. I bolted, and never stopped running for half a mile. One bite from a snake always meant death. I think that snake was changing his skin, for the skin had the transparent white appearance one sees on the skins when the snake has shed them.

On that property my uncle was shooting with a friend once. The friend saw a snake going down a hole; he made a grab and pulled it out, intending to kill it, but it gripped his hand by its tail and hung on. Of course, it would bite if it could. He swung his hand round as hard as he could, and the centrifugal action prevented the snake biting, and at last it let go.

On one occasion it started to rain and I was a little way from the house and had a small cousin with me. I took her hand and started to run to the house. On stepping over a tussock of grass I put my foot right into the coils of a huge snake. The shock was horrible, and I bolted. The little girl never touched the ground for a long time. That girl's brother carried a piece of piping he had picked up, some distance when a snake started to crawl out of it. The snake was hibernating, and the warmth of the hand or the motion woke it.

I once saw a snake go for some chickens. The two mothers attacked it on each side, making quick pecks at it, and eventually killing it. It was a good-sized snake, about four feet long. It came out from under the house.

We had some calico lining under the corrugated iron roof, and I once saw a snake crawl across on this – unpleasant proximity of possible death.

Once, when a kid, I was crawling along to get behind a stone wall in range of a native companion – a tall bird of the crane species, much bigger than a crane. I was terribly excited, as it was very big game to me, when, all of a sudden, I put my hand on a snake. I jumped up and sprang away, then down again at once, but too late, the native companion had seen me and flown. I looked for the snake then, but he had gone too. It is an old saying, "If you take your eye off a snake you won't see it again."

One Monday morning the book-keeper said at breakfast:

"Jack Vincent woke up yesterday afternoon and found a snake up his trousers."

On my asking Jack, he said, yes, it was true, and he had whipped his bags off pretty quick.

After a pigeon match in Rockhampton the referee told me he was bicycling home and ran over a snake; the snake bit his tyre and punctured it. I ran over a snake once on a bike; it gave me a most horrible feeling – if the snake rose and struck I was a dead man, and I felt dreadfully helpless.

The manager of the neighbouring station told me that once on the arrival of the mail he put his hand into the mail-bag to get the mail. He felt something bite his hand, and found a rat and a snake in the bag. He added that it was very unpleasant waiting to see which had bitten him; if it had been the snake that had bitten him he would have died in a few hours. On another occasion when he was sleeping in a tent with a horse-breaker, he woke up and felt a snake crawling over his hand. He yelled, “Snake!” and flung it away; it landed on the other man’s face. The other man, Jack Toone, told me one had only to call “Snake!” for months afterwards to set his nerves going, and yet Jack was the gamest man on a horse I ever saw, and must have had exceptionally good nerves. It is impossible to realise the hideous sensation that coming suddenly into dangerous proximity with a snake gives one.

The antidote for snake-bite is injecting strychnine; a very stiff dose of brandy or whisky also helps. A son of a friend of mine was bitten by a snake. His father poured him out a full tumbler of neat whisky. The boy, aged twelve, drank it and said it was water – there was no taste of whisky. They injected strychnine and he got over the bite. The poison induces sleep and then death, and if one is bitten, the first thing is to keep the bitten man walking about.

I knew one man who used to come in out of the long grass every morning about twelve o’clock and say he was bitten by a snake, and drink off a stiff whisky. He repeated the dose frequently during the day, and used to put away three bottles a day. I was only a boy, but a doctor told me he would like to hold a post-mortem on him to see his liver. Strangely enough he did. The poor chap got a growth which stopped him eating, and he died of starvation – and the doctor told me it was the finest liver he had ever seen.

I expect his snake-bites resembled the snakes in the story of the man who was travelling in a train, and taking great care of a box he had with him. The other passengers got curious, and tried to find out what was in the box. He would not tell them for a long time, but at last he said he had a mongoose in the box and was taking it out to a friend of his who drank too much and was always seeing snakes, and the mongoose would kill the snakes.

“But,” they said, “you don’t think those are real snakes, do you?”

“No,” he said, “and you don’t think this is a real mongoose, do you?”

I was once walking behind two other men across the bed of a creek full of rushes. We were walking fast and close together, when suddenly the front man ran, and instantly after the second rushed ahead, but I passed them. We had walked over a snake, and

as it was between my legs its head was up to strike. It was all paralysingly and startlingly quick. It would not be a second from the moment the front man bolted till when I did. Whenever one comes suddenly within danger of death from a snake-bite, one always automatically dashes away.

The wife of one of my brothers took two canaries in separate cages to their sheep-station and hung them on the veranda about a foot apart. One morning they found a big tiger snake stuck in both cages and no canaries. It had eaten them both and could not get the swallowed canaries through the bars of the cage.

One of the weirdest sights I ever saw was a hawk carrying a snake high into the air and then dropping it to kill it from several hundred feet up. The poor brute wriggled all the way down. It was the only snake I ever felt sorry for.

In the old days four men came into Melbourne from the bush. They played poker in the Melbourne Club after dinner on Friday. They stopped for breakfast on Saturday, and played on; another halt for breakfast on Sunday; on again until Monday after breakfast.

“What about it?” one man asked.

“Well,” said another, “I’ll play, but I must catch the train to Sydney on Thursday.”

Australia has innumerable stories of people making fortunes. One story is of a couple who started by selling apples in the street in a barrow, and when the inhabitants of Melbourne had bought all the apples they required, this couple wheeled the barrow to Ballarat – a distance of fifty miles or more – and sold the rest of the apples there. They eventually amassed a great fortune – and all honour to them for their humble beginning.

Two brothers bought a horse and dray and worked it for £1 a day. They eventually owned large sheep-stations, and their descendants must have made hundreds of thousands of pounds a year amongst them.

I can remember Melbourne when only five people owned carriages, and there was only one fish shop. Two Chinamen used to drag a net at St. Kilda, and that was the only fish caught.

Melbourne had one perilous time; it started with a wild land boom. Every one was buying land at fabulous prices, and when the slump came thousands were ruined. My father was one of the few sellers; he sold a property for £15 an acre that he had bought for £5, and netted £50,000 profit. He was trustee for an aunt of mine who had a beautiful house and thirty acres of land round it in one of the fashionable suburbs. The boomers offered £250,000 for the land, agreeing to leave the house and eight acres. My father advised her to accept the offer and get a £50,000 deposit, and, as he said, that would probably be the end of it. But she would not sell. Even if they had completed the purchase, that money at five per cent. would now be over £2,000,000, and in those days one could get far more than five per cent.

Coupled with this land boom came a severe drought and low prices for wool and sheep. A panic then set in and the banks began to smash. People were in a terrible state. The Government gave the banks the right to close for a week. The three largest banks kept their doors open and people rushed in to draw out their money. Two of these banks were in the main street opposite each other. One of the first to draw his money out had a credit of £100,000. When the sovereigns were dealt out to him he did not know what to do with them. He first asked the general manager of the bank to pay in notes, and was told that there was a rush on the bank and they must pay everything in gold. Then he asked for help to carry the money out into a cab, and was told every one was busy paying out. He next got a policeman and put the money into a cab. Then came the question what to do with it. If it were known he had 100,000 sovereigns in his house he would probably be burgled and killed. This same question worried a great many other people with smaller amounts, and they put the money under their pillows or in other safe places, and worried all night. The man with the £100,000 drove about for a while and then took it to the other bank opposite and deposited it there. Many others did the same, and people were drawing out of one bank and depositing it in the other for the next two days. If one bank was running short, the other bank would send gold across to it to carry on with.

It was not so long before this that the City of Glasgow Bank had smashed, owing to a run on it. It had brought ruin to many thousands, and people had a horror of the dangers of a run on the banks. No doubt many of the banks were hard hit, and several had to reconstruct.

The Queensland National Bank was in a bad way, and my coastal town, Rockhampton, could not get any money. For some time no one could pay their butcher or baker, et cetera, but the meat and bread were delivered daily as usual.

My eldest brother [George] was a Director of the Union Bank of Australia, and he was with me in the bush in Queensland at the time with a key of a safe containing 1,000,000 sovereigns reserve which was not opened. A £10,000 promissory note I had given for payment of 40,000 wethers I had bought fell due that week, and was met by a small branch of a bank.

The upshot of the run on the Union Bank of Australia was that they opened 3,000 new accounts.

THE END